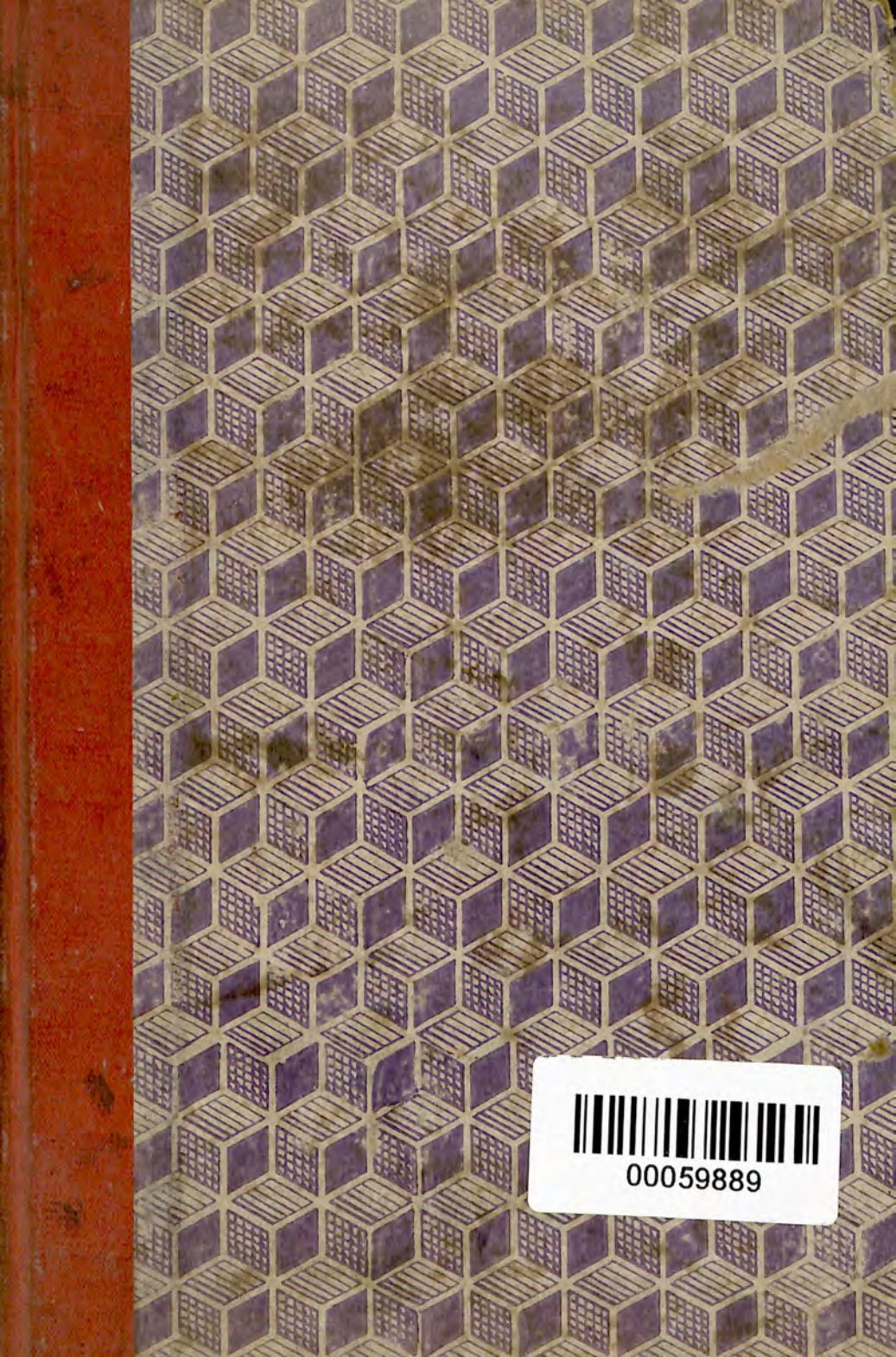
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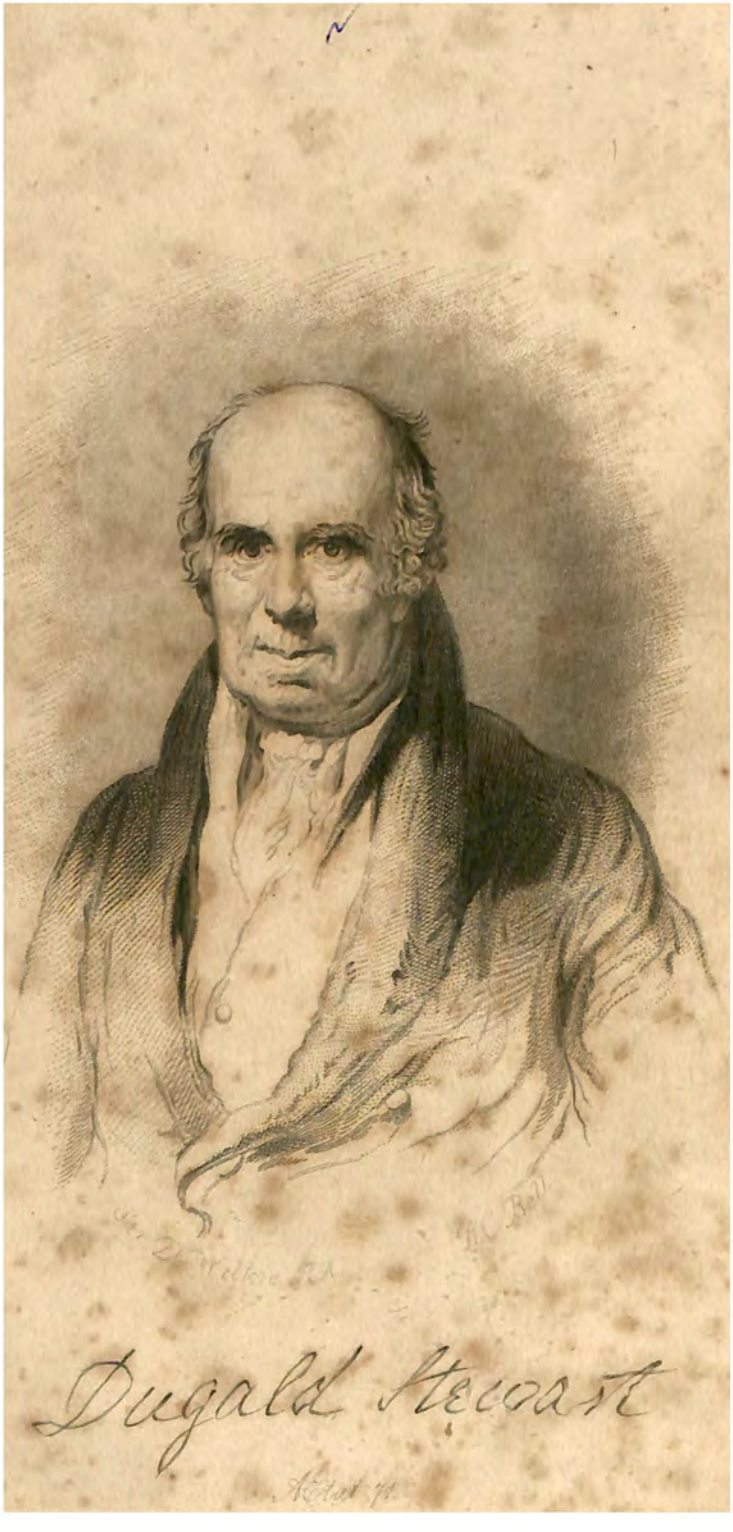
THE COLLECTED WORKS

OF

DUGALD STEWART.


Dugald Stewart

THE COLLECTED WORKS

OF

DUGALD STEWART, ESQ., F.R.SS.

HONORARY MEMBER OF THE IMPERIAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AT ST. PETERSBURG;
MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ACADEMIES OF BERLIN AND OF NAPLES; OF THE
AMERICAN SOCIETIES OF PHILADELPHIA AND OF BOSTON;
HONORARY MEMBER OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF
CAMBRIDGE; PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

59889

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F. b. 4.

VOL. X.

EDINBURGH: THOMAS CONSTABLE
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BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIRS

OF

ADAM SMITH, LL.D.

WILLIAM ROBERTSON, D.D.

THOMAS REID, D.D.

EDITED BY

SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON, BART.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A MEMOIR OF DUGALD STEWART,

WITH SELECTIONS FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE.

BY JOHN VEITCH, M.A.

EDINBURGH: THOMAS CONSTABLE AND CO.

HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO., LONDON.

MDCCCLVIII.

ADVERTISEMENT TO PRESENT EDITION.

The Memoirs by Mr. Stewart, contained in the present and concluding volume of his Collected Works, were read by him at different periods before the Royal Society of Edinburgh; the first in order being the Account of Adam Smith, in 1793; the second, that of Principal Robertson, in 1796; and the third, that of Dr. Reid, in 1802. The Memoir of Smith was originally published in the third volume of the *Transactions* of the Society. Each of the others formed an independent publication. The whole were, however, collected and reprinted in one volume, in the year 1811.

These Memoirs, as here republished, were printed under Sir William Hamilton's revision and superintendence, from private copies belonging to the Author, which contained a few manuscript additions by him. Insertions from this source, given in the present edition, are marked by square brackets,

and with the words, *Author's last addition;* while the notes of the Editor are distinguished by an asterisk, &c. The Index to the Memoirs has been compiled from Sir William Hamilton's copy, containing the references which he had made with a view to its formation.

This Edition of Mr. Stewart's Works thus embraces every thing published by him, with the exception of the two pamphlets in the Leslie Case,[1] which it has been deemed unnecessary to republish in a connected form. The contents of these pamphlets are, in great part, of a controversial nature, and of purely temporary interest; while the philosophical matter, original and historical, which they contain, appears, with little difference of form, in other writings of the Author. The first, and more important, is indeed principally made up of quotations from authorities regarding the theory of Causation, in one of its aspects. Such of these testimonies as are not comprised in the First Volume of the *Elements* (Note C, with the relative text, chap. i. sect. ii.), and in the Second Volume (Note O, with its relative text, chap. iv. sect. i.), will be found, with some of Mr. Stewart's accompanying remarks, in a note entitled, Art. iv. *Causation*, appended by Sir William Hamilton to the latter of the volumes now mentioned (*Elements*, vol. ii. p. 417, *et seq.*)

[1] Referred to at p. lxxv., *et seq.*, of *Memoir of Dugald Stewart.*

It is proposed to add a Supplementary Volume to those already published, containing Translations of the Passages from Ancient and Foreign Authors, quoted by Mr. Stewart in the course of his Writings, and a General Index to the whole Works. This will complete the Edition of Mr. Stewart's Collected Works.

J. V.

EDINBURGH, *December* 1857.

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MEMOIR OF DUGALD STEWART,

WITH SELECTIONS FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE.

BY JOHN VEITCH, M.A.

PREFACE.

THE Editorship of the Collected Works of Professor DUGALD STEWART, which was appropriately committed by the Trustees of Miss Stewart to Sir William Hamilton, involved the preparation of a Memoir of the Author. The illustrious Editor had proceeded so far as to complete the publication of Nine Volumes of the works, and revise for the press the Memoirs of Smith, Robertson, and Reid, which appear in the present or Tenth Volume. Failing health, especially during the last year of his life, interrupted the preparation of the Memoir of Mr. Stewart, which was designed to form part of this volume. This cause had even led him to depart from the purpose of an original connected narrative of Mr. Stewart's life, as is manifest from the following Proposal made to Mr. Constable, of date 3d April 1856:—"I intend to incorporate in this Tenth Volume the following:—

"1. The Memoir of his father by Col. Matthew Stewart; with Notes and Additions by me.

"2. An Extract about Mr. Stewart and his Philosophy, from his friend Mackintosh's *Preliminary Dissertation;* to which will also be added Notes by me.

"3. Observations by me on Stewart's Philosophy, and its

Connexion with the Scottish School, and the doctrine of Common Sense.

"4. A Selection from Mr. Stewart's Correspondence, with occasional observations on his life. The Correspondence will necessarily be imperfect; Col. Stewart having taken away many, if not most, of the more important letters relating to his father, and which were ultimately by him destroyed.

* * * * * * *

"In regard to *time*, I expect, if health be granted to me, that the volume will be ready for publication by the end of autumn,—the next publishing season.

(Signed) "W. HAMILTON."

His lamented death, in the following month, prevented the accomplishment of this proposal—the last literary design of its author.

For the purposes of the Memoir, Sir William Hamilton had perused and noted what of Mr. Stewart's Correspondence was at that time collected, and in his hands. He had also commenced the preparation of "Observations on Mr. Stewart's Philosophy," &c.,—No. 3 of the Proposal. But these, it is deeply to be regretted, assumed no shape beyond that of fragmentary notes on separate points of the subject; nor have they a special bearing on the doctrines of Mr. Stewart.[1] Though brief and interrupted, and written in the lassitude of failing bodily vigour, those fragments show all the force of the master mind, and possess that melancholy interest which attaches to the last words of one, whose life had been an earnest and profound meditation of the reach and bounds of human knowledge,—especially of man's relations to the

[1] An appropriate place for the publication of these notices may be found in connexion with the *Lectures* of the Author, now in the press.

Supersensible and Infinite,—and whose contemplation of the highest themes, while it issued in teaching contentment with a "learned ignorance," as the climax of human science, served, at the same time, to increase the humility of the man,—until at length, the love of knowledge becoming more and more the spirit of faith, the period of life that bordered on the setting of an intellect that had shone so luminous, was especially distinguished by the mellow radiance of deepening reverence.

For the following Memoir of Mr. Stewart, I am therefore alone responsible.

Materials for a detailed account of the life of Mr. Stewart do not exist. The largest and most valuable part of his Correspondence—his Journals kept in Paris before and shortly after the commencement of the Revolution of 1789, and during his visit to that city with Lord Lauderdale in 1806,—and, in general, all papers of interest fitted to throw light on his private life and social relations, were unfortunately destroyed by his son, Colonel Stewart, under the influence of mental delusion, arising from *coup-de-soleil*, and the effects of climate, while in India. Col. Stewart had prepared for publication a detailed *Account of the Life and Writings of his Father*, which abounded in anecdotes, and notices of the many distinguished men of the end of the last, and first quarter of the present, century, with whom Mr. Stewart was on terms of intimacy. But this perished with the other papers. The loss of this manuscript is deeply to be regretted, when we take into account the ability of its author, and the sources of information to which he had access.[1]

[1] See Stewart's *Works*, vol. viii., *Political Economy*, vol. i., Advertisement by the Editor, pp. 9-11.

Being thus restricted, in respect of materials of biography, to Mr. Stewart's writings,—in which, indeed, his life is mainly to be read,—to general incidents, traditional impressions, fragmentary correspondence, and hints gathered from some who were personally acquainted with Mr. Stewart, I have sought to concentrate the scattered lights arising from those sources, so that, if unable to place in full relief the minutest features, I might, at least in some measure, recall and fix the general lineaments of his character, before oblivion should sweep wholly away even the few personal traces that remain, and thus merge both the Man and Academic Teacher in the Author.

Few men have won from friends a more ready love, or commanded among contemporaries greater personal reverence, than Dugald Stewart. His life,—simple, unvaried, and unostentatious, spent in the quest and inculcation of high truths, and in the love and practice of virtue,—appeared to all who knew him the exemplification of the elevated doctrines which he taught from the Chair, and to which he has given permanency in his Writings. A general notice of such a life would be valuable, did it merely prove the means of suggesting a lofty ideal of human character, and serve to keep in mind, as the incentive of a noble ambition, the fact of its actual realisation.

To the Memoir proper there is added a chapter containing a general notice of the Method and Scope of Scottish Philosophy, as represented by the writings of Reid and Stewart. This is by no means offered as a full discussion even of the Method, far less of the Results of Scottish Speculation. It may, however, afford a vindication and illustration of some fundamental points in that Philosophy.

To the many,—personal friends of Mr. Stewart, or otherwise interested in the Memoir,—from whom I have received general aid, I beg to offer my sincere thanks. Among these I have to

make special mention of the following:—Lady Hamilton, whose general assistance, most readily and kindly given, has been invaluable; the family of the late Dugald Bannatyne, Esq., Glasgow, (brother-in-law of Mr. Stewart,) and Mrs. Romilly, Liverpool, the intimate friend of Miss Stewart,—who most kindly placed at my service many letters and papers of value in connexion with the subject of the Memoir; Peter Miller, Esq., M.D., Exeter, (son of the Rev. Dr. Miller of Cumnock, and nephew of Mr. Stewart,) to whom I am indebted for careful memoranda of the family, and general notices of interest; Dr. W. P. Alison, Emeritus Professor of Medicine in the University of Edinburgh, (the elder son of the Rev. Archibald Alison,) to whose personal intimacy with Mr. Stewart, and eminent accomplishments in branches of learning, apart even from that study in which he is an acknowledged master,—especially his liberal acquaintance with Philosophy,—I owe many valuable suggestions; and who very kindly placed at my service the most important of Mr. Stewart's letters that have been preserved (Appendix A). I am also indebted, for letters of Mr. Stewart, to the family of the late Professor Macvey Napier, (through James T. Gibson Craig, Esq., Edinburgh;) to the family of the late M. Prévost of Geneva; to the Baron Degerando, the son of the author of the *Histoire des Systèmes de Philosophie*, (through the Baroness Blaze de Bury;) and to Leonard Horner, Esq., London.

For the present Edition of the Collected Works of Mr. Stewart, Dr. Miller has kindly furnished two Engravings,—the one from an admirable picture of the Author when in his seventy-first year, by Wilkie in black-lead; and the other from a bust by Joseph. The engraving from the picture is by Robert Bell, Edinburgh, from a plate by Cousins, and, in

the opinion of competent judges, conveys a correct and excellent likeness. The bust by Joseph is executed with his usual talent; but it shows in the muscles about the mouth marks of the paralytic attack which Mr. Stewart had some time before experienced. A portrait of Mr. Stewart about the age of fifty-five, was painted by Raeburn for Lord Woodhouselee; and, at a later period, the same eminent artist began, but unfortunately only partially finished, another portrait. I may also notice that Tassie, and subsequently Henning, made medallions of Mr. Stewart, which convey a correct idea of his profile.

J. V.

EDINBURGH, *December* 1857.

MEMOIR OF DUGALD STEWART.

CHAPTER I.

Birth—His father, Dr. Matthew Stewart—Attends High School of Edinburgh—Passes to the University—Studies under Stevenson, Ferguson, and Russell—The teaching of Stevenson and Ferguson—Studies under Reid in Glasgow—General sketch of Speculative Philosophy in Scotland before Reid,—Carmichael, Hutcheson, Baxter, Kames, Hume—Reid's teaching—Stewart's first Philosophical Essay—Friendship with Alison—Teaches the Mathematical Classes in Edinburgh for his father—Acts as substitute for Adam Ferguson in the Chair of Moral Philosophy—His brilliant success as a Lecturer on Morals.

DUGALD STEWART was born in Edinburgh, on the 22d November 1753. The house of his birth formed part of the old College buildings,[1] and was attached to the Professorship of Mathematics in the University, which was held by his father, Dr. Matthew Stewart. His mother was Marjory, only child of Archibald Stewart of Catrine, Writer to the Signet in Edinburgh.[2]

Dr. Stewart was the son of the Rev. Dugald Stewart,[3] minister of Rothesay, where he was born in 1717. He entered the University of Glasgow in 1734, studying under Hutcheson and Simson. In 1741 he removed to Edinburgh, where he became a pupil of the distinguished mathematician, Colin Maclaurin.

[1] Removed to make way for the present structure, the foundation-stone of which was laid in 1789.

[2] Dugald Stewart was the third child of this marriage. His elder brother, Archibald, died in infancy. There were besides two daughters,—Janet, (born 1752, died 1789,) wife of the Dr. Rev. Thomas Miller of Cumnock; and Christian, (born 1758, died, unmarried, in 1837.)

[3] He was ordained minister of Rothesay in 1700, and held the charge for upwards of fifty years. Dr. Stewart's mother was Janet Bannatyne, related to the Bannatynes of Kames, Isle of Bute.

He was ordained minister of Roseneath in 1745, and two years afterwards was appointed the successor of Maclaurin in the Mathematical Chair in Edinburgh, which he occupied until his death in 1785.

Dr. Stewart shared the admiration of his master, Simson, for the ancient geometry. His great aim, as a mathematician, was the application of its methods to problems generally regarded as capable of solution only by the algebraic analysis. He has left some writings in applied mathematics. From the evidence furnished by these, as well as the testimony of competent authorities among his contemporaries at home and abroad, Dr. Stewart appears to have been a highly original and elegant mathematician.[1]

One intellectual peculiarity of the father is worth noticing, as it was hardly less characteristic of the son. Dr. Stewart was an ardent and assiduous student, especially of geometry, from his youth; and so great was the power of abstraction and concentration which he had thus acquired in his own science, that he was in the habit of conducting his geometrical investigations mentally, without writing out the different steps of the process. He contented himself with simply jotting down the enunciation and figure of a theorem, leaving the rest to the imagination, and only fully wrote out a demonstration when it was required for publication. It is not a little remarkable that a habit of quite as intense and assiduous concentration, though applied to a different and much more difficult order of investigation, formed a distinguishing peculiarity of the mind of his son, from a very early period of life.

Of the mother of Dugald Stewart nothing is known of any interest beyond what is recorded by her grandson, Colonel Stewart, in his brief but able *Memoir* of his father.[2] "She was a woman," says Colonel Stewart, "remarkable for her good sense, and for great sweetness and kindliness of disposition,

[1] For a fuller account of the life and writings of Dr. Stewart, see the notice of him by his friend, Professor Playfair, in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, vol. i.; and Playfair's *Works*, vol. iv.

[2] Privately printed in 1838.

and was always remembered by her son with the warmest sentiments of filial affection." She died at the age of fifty, in 1771.

Details regarding the early years of Dugald Stewart's life are very scanty. His health, at no time robust, was, as we learn from the *Memoir* by his son, "during the first period of his life so feeble and precarious, that it was with more than ordinary anxiety and solicitude of parents that his infancy was reared. His early years were spent partly in the house, at that time attached to the Mathematical Chair of the University, and partly at Catrine, his father's property in Ayrshire,[1] [parish of Sorn,] to which the family regularly removed every summer when the academical session was concluded."[2]

The old mansion-house of Catrine (built in 1682) stands on the left bank of the Water of Ayr, in a picturesque and well-wooded valley. It continued to be the favourite summer retreat of Mr. Stewart for many years after his appointment to a chair in the University.[3] Its charms for him as a residence were, however, destroyed by the erection in 1792 of a large cotton-mill on the opposite bank of the river, and the consequent rise, in room of the small and secluded hamlet of Catrine, of a populous manufacturing village.[4]

[1] Mr. Stewart's maternal grandfather purchased the small estate of Catrine from Mr. Aird, whose daughter, Christian, was his second wife, and the step-mother of Mrs. Matthew Stewart. Catrine devolved on Dr. Matthew Stewart in right of his wife.

[2] *Memoir*, p. 3.

[3] Burns was an occasional visitor at Catrine, which is only a few miles from the farm of Mossgiel. Mr. Stewart was an early friend of the poet. Burns writes regarding Mr. Stewart, in 1786, —"I would be delighted to see him perform acts of kindness and friendship, though I were not the object; he does it with such grace. I think his character, divided into ten parts, stands thus:—four parts Socrates, four parts Nathanael, and two parts Shakspeare's Brutus." —(*Life and Works of Burns*—Chambers' Edition, p. 330.) He thus commemorates father and son in the *Vision*:—

> "With deep-struck reverential awe
> The learned sire and son I saw;
> To Nature's God and Nature's law,
> They gave their lore;
> This all its source and end to draw,
> That, to adore."

See Appendix A, for Letter of Mr. Stewart to Dr. Currie, giving an account of Burns.

[4] The author of the *Statistical Account of the Parish of Sorn* thus refers to the impression regarding Mr. Stewart, which lingers in the district:—"Individuals still speak with delight of his unwearied benevolence, of his kindness and condescension to all who came within the sphere of his influence, particularly to those he knew had been the objects of his father's regard."—*Statistical Account of Ayrshire—Parish of Sorn*—1842.

Stewart received the principal part of his early education at the High School of Edinburgh. He entered this seminary in 1761, in his eighth year. His first master was Robert Farquhar, under whose charge he remained until 1764. He then passed to the Rector's class, which he attended for two years. The Rector at this period was Alexander Matheson, a man of considerable accomplishments as a scholar, and a successful teacher. Alexander Adam, who succeeded Matheson in the rectorship, was employed during the greater part of the two years of Dugald Stewart's attendance on the Rector's class, as Matheson's substitute, in consequence of the ill health of the latter. Stewart thus enjoyed, at a critical age, the privilege of the instruction of one who was destined to give a powerful impulse to Scottish classical scholarship.[1]

The tradition regarding his career at school is, that he was distinguished by quickness and accuracy of apprehension; and that his translations of the classics displayed singular felicity and spirit.[2] This impression, whatever be its ground, is probably not far from the truth. The classical taste and wide acquaintance with Roman literature, which his writings display, are hardly compatible with the supposition that he was a dull or negligent pupil at school. The love of classical literature thus early acquired, he cherished through life. Its influence is conspicuous both in the matter and manner of his writings. He

[1] Steven's *History of the High School*, pp. 106, 107—from information furnished by Mr. Stewart himself. In a letter to M. Prévost, (1817,) Mr. Stewart thus refers to the system of instruction introduced into that seminary under its rector, Mr. Pillans, as compared with the method pursued at the time of his attendance:—"The distance at which I have lived, for the last seven years, from Edinburgh, has put it out of my power to attend to the details of the new method of instruction adopted in the High School. But I have seen enough of the results to convince me of its great utility, not only in quickening the progress of the pupils in Classical Learning, and in the collateral studies of Ancient History and Geography, but in strengthening and invigorating their powers of attention, memory, and judgment.

"The improvement, indeed, strikes me as wonderful, when I compare it with the plan followed in the same school when I was educated there, (about fifty years ago,) under the late learned Dr. Adam, with whose very useful elementary books you are probably acquainted."

[2] *Memoir*, p. 4; *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Art. Dugald Stewart.

was especially an assiduous student of the poetry of ancient Rome. His delicate sensibility to literary beauty, and finely modulated voice, gave a great charm to his reading of classical poetry. So powerful was the hold which this kind of literature had upon him, that it was his custom, in after years, when from any cause he was unfitted for other efforts of mind—especially when towards the close of life his bodily health and vigour were broken—to betake himself for relief and solace to the pages of his favourite Latin poets.

From the High School, Stewart passed to the University of his native city. His first College Session was 1765-66, in which he was enrolled as a student of Humanity. After passing through the Greek class in the second year of his course, he entered the class of Logic, which he attended for two consecutive sessions—1767-68, 1768-69, under the venerable Stevenson. He completed the usual University course, by attendance (1768-69) on Natural Philosophy, under James Russell.[1]

At the period when Stewart pursued his college studies in Edinburgh, intellectual life in the University was nourished in great measure by the writings of Bacon and Newton. The three Gregorys,[2] who held in succession the Mathematical Chair in Edinburgh, and more recently the celebrated Maclaurin, who occupied the same chair from 1725 to 1746, had left their impress on the teaching of the University. Mr. Stewart's father, pupil and successor of Maclaurin, was a man of kindred spirit and genius, and worthily sustained the renown of the chair. James Russell, moreover, Professor of Natural Philosophy from 1764 to 1773, appears to have been a man of comprehensive views, who rose above the mere details of his science, leading the minds of his pupils to those general principles of philosophical inquiry, out of which had arisen the splendid edifice of the Newtonian physics.[3]

[1] There is no University record of Mr. Stewart's having attended the class of Moral Philosophy under Adam Ferguson. We have, however, his own statement on this point.—*Works, Life of Reid*, vol. x. p. 261.

[2] James, inventor of the reflecting telescope; David, his nephew, afterwards Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford; and James, brother of the latter.

[3] *Works, Life of Reid*, vol. x. p. 261.

It was doubtless under this prevailing influence that Stewart first imbibed that admiration of Bacon—his spirit, method, and aims—which, being fostered by subsequent influences, gathered strength with his years, and harmonising with his constitutional caution and the general cast of his intellect, had so large a share in giving its distinctive character to the speculative work of his life.

It is now impossible precisely to ascertain the nature or amount of the proficiency Stewart made in the mathematical sciences at college. This was probably considerably beyond the average, both from his having been called upon by his father, some few years afterwards, to undertake the charge of the Mathematical Classes in the University, and from the success with which he conducted them. Those sciences, indeed, continued to possess an interest for him through life; but more in a philosophical point of view, as filling a place in the scheme of human knowledge, than from any strong predilection for them as an independent object of study. The methods of investigation which those sciences exemplify—the kind of truth and evidence with which they deal—the analogies and divergences they present as compared with the other sciences, and their influence on the intellectual and moral character of those who pursue them, were, in the maturity of his powers, favourite subjects of reflection with Mr. Stewart.[1]

But the Metropolitan University, even at this early period, provided intellectual nourishment of a higher kind, and more fitted to develop the speculative tendency, than is afforded by any physical or mathematical science. The two men, besides Russell, to whom Mr. Stewart refers as having most contributed during his attendance at the University of Edinburgh to give impulse and direction to the course which his subsequent studies assumed, are John Stevenson and Adam Ferguson.

Stevenson was Professor of Logic and Metaphysics. He occupied the chair for the long period of forty-five years,

[1] On the nature of mathematical evidence, see *Works*, vol. iii., *Elements*, ii. 113, *et seq.* For the influence of mathematical studies on the character, intellectual and moral, see *Works*, vol. iv., *Elements*, iii. 201.—*The Mathematician.*

(1730-1775.) His course of teaching embraced Logic proper, Metaphysics, the Theory of Taste, and the General History of Philosophy. In all those departments, he made use of text-books, as the basis or supplement of his prelections. These were, in Logic and the History of Philosophy, the *Elementa Philosophiæ Rationalis et Moralis* of Heineccius[1]—in Metaphysics, De Vries' *Determinationes Ontologicæ*,[2] and Bishop Wynne's *Abridgment of Locke's Essay*—in Rhetoric, Aristotle's *Poetics*, and Longinus *On the Sublime*.[3]

Stevenson's philosophical teaching had little, if any originality. He sought more to inform and educate, by making use of what was already at hand, than to excite thinking by fresh speculative products. He belonged to the school of Locke in its earliest form, accepting the doctrines of its founder very nearly as these are presented in the *Essay*. Stevenson was, in fact, the first to introduce the speculations of Locke into the University teaching of Scotland.[4] He lived to see

[1] Io. Gottl. Heineccii, *Elementa Philosophiæ Rationalis et Moralis*. Præmissa est Historia Philosophica. Amstelodami. (Ed. Quart.) 1740. (Ed. P. 1728.) Heineccius (1680-1741) was for some time Professor of Philosophy at Halle, and distinguished as an able and voluminous writer on jurisprudence. His logic is not remarkable among the popular compends of the time.

[2] Gerardi de Vries, Profes. Philos., Ultraject. *De Catholicis Rerum Attributis Determinationes Ontologicæ*. (1st ed. 1687.) Pars Secunda—*De Natura Dei et Humanæ Mentis Determinationes Pneumatologicæ*. (1st ed. 1690.) De Vries, Professor of Philosophy at Utrecht, was an acute and eloquent opponent of Cartesianism, in certain of its fundamental dogmas, especially the nature and import of our knowledge of the Infinite.—See his *Exercitationes de Deo Divinisque Perfectionibus*.

[3] *Evidence taken before the University Commissioners*. Rev. Dr. (now Principal) Lee.—See vol. i. p. 596. *Life of Erskine*, by Sir H. Moncreiff Wellwood, D.D., pp. 20, 21. *Scots Magazine*, August 1741. Bower's *History of the University*, vol. ii. p. 274, *et seq*. Under Stevenson, the Logic Class met three hours daily—at eight in the morning, eleven, and two. The first hour was devoted to Rhetoric, including the reading of classical poetry, especially the Iliad, the second to Logic and Metaphysics, the third to the History of Philosophy. Stevenson continued the scholastic practice of oral disputation, and held frequent examinations.

[4] In the last decade of the seventeenth century, the Scottish Parliament, influenced mainly by political considerations, sought to regulate the philosophical teaching of the Universities. Certain of those bodies were enjoined to prepare compends in special departments of philosophy, which, after receiving the approval of a commission of Parliament, were to become text-books for the Universities generally. The University of Edinburgh was appointed

those doctrines reach their meridian influence, and also to observe their decline. About the time Mr. Stewart attended his prelections, Stevenson had become convinced of the narrowness and inadequacy of the theory of Locke. He was among the first to appreciate the *Inquiry into the Human Mind*, (1764,) which was destined not only to counteract the doctrines of Locke in Scotland, but to revolutionise the Metaphysics of Britain and France.[1]

to draw up the metaphysical compend; that of St. Andrews the logical. The former, like the other metaphysical digests of the period, does little more than arrange and define a series of notions; the logical compend is taken chiefly from the logic of Port-Royal. Both compends were published in London in 1701. The one is entitled, *An Introduction to Metaphysicks* (pp. 56); the other, *An Introduction to Logick*, (pp. 56). This attempt to control the teaching of the Universities in its highest departments failed, as it deserved to do. The Parliament virtually withdrew from the contest in 1699. It appears, from certain philosophical dogmas condemned by the Commission, that the predominant influence in the Universities at the period referred to, was sensational, being chiefly that of Gassendi. Stevenson's teaching, though not philosophically higher, was, from its compass, its human interest, and the general culture at which it aimed, a very important advance on the instruction of the era in question.—Bower's *History of the University of Edinburgh*, vol. i. ch. vii. p. 349, *et seq.*

[1] The circumstance referred to in the following quotation is strongly characteristic of the bent of the Scottish mind, besides affording a glimpse of the early studies of Stevenson:—"The impression produced in England by Berkeley's Idealism was not so great as might have been expected; but the novelty of his paradoxes attracted very powerfully the attention of a set of young men who were then prosecuting their studies at Edinburgh, and who formed themselves into a society for the express purpose of soliciting from the author an explanation of some parts of his theory, which seemed to them obscurely or equivocally expressed. To this correspondence the amiable and excellent prelate appears to have given every encouragement; and I have been told by the best authority, that he was accustomed to say, that his reasonings had been nowhere better understood than by this club of young Scotsmen.[1] The ingenious Dr. Wallace, author of the *Discourse on the Numbers of Mankind*, was one of the leading members; and with him were associated several other individuals, whose names are now well known and honourably distinguished in the learned world. Mr. Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*, which was published in 1739, affords sufficient evidence of the deep impression which Berkeley's writings had left upon his mind; and to this juvenile essay of Mr. Hume's may be traced the origin of the most important metaphysical works which Scotland has since produced."—Stewart's *Works*, vol. i.; *Dissert.* pp. 350-351.

[1] "The authority I here allude to is that of my old friend and preceptor, Dr. John Stevenson, who was himself a member of the *Rankenian* Club, and who was accustomed for many years to mention this fact in his *Academical Prelections.*"

If Stevenson was not highly distinguished as a purely philosophical teacher, the influence of his general discipline, as an educator of the judgment and taste, was very marked. For nearly half a century, and within the sphere he sketched for himself, there was no more influential teacher in Scotland. On this point we have the highly pertinent testimony of Principal Robertson, who acknowledged that he was more deeply indebted to Stevenson's instructions (especially his illustrations of Aristotle's *Poetics*, and Longinus *On the Sublime*) than to any other influence in the course of his academical studies.[1] Mr. Stewart makes special acknowledgment of his intellectual obligations to Stevenson.[2] There can be little doubt that the improved literary taste manifested in the Scottish capital towards the middle and end of the century, was greatly aided by his well-directed and powerful though unobtrusive academical teaching.[3]

But the philosophical instructor, who, from the character of his mind and doctrines, was most fitted to attract the sympathy and admiration of Stewart, was Adam Ferguson, Professor of Moral Philosophy from 1764 to 1785. That his teaching contributed greatly to develop the speculative taste of the pupil who was destined to be his successor, the numerous references

[1] Stewart's *Works*, vol. x. p. 105, *Life of Robertson*. Very high testimony is likewise borne to the efficiency of Stevenson by Dr. John Erskine. See his *Life* by Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood, pp. 19-21.

[2] *Works*, vol. x. *Life of Reid*, p. 261.

[3] In 1748, and in the two subsequent years, Adam Smith, then a young man of twenty-five, recently returned from Oxford, having abandoned the design of studying for the Church, gave a course of Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in Edinburgh. These lectures were numerously attended. Blair began to lecture on the same subject in 1758; while the *Elements of Criticism* by Kames appeared in 1762. The Chair of Rhetoric, which Blair was the first to occupy, was instituted in the latter year. Those influences sustained and enhanced the training of Stevenson; but some of them were, no doubt, in the first instance, materially determined by it, and all were greatly dependent on it for wide popular effect. The Edinburgh *Select Society*, established 1754, should, moreover, be kept in view in every estimate of those causes which contributed to the general progress and diffusion of literary taste in Scotland in the 18th century. On the general subject of the philosophical and literary history of Scotland, from the period here referred to down to our own times, see an able and interesting Essay by the Count de Rémusat, *Revue des Deux Mondes*; April 1856.

which Mr. Stewart has made throughout his writings to his master, and his distinctive opinions, leave no ground of doubt. Ferguson's course, as was usual at that period in the Scottish Universities, embraced Ethics and Politics. He brought to bear on those subjects considerable speculative power, great knowledge of the world, and the results of a long study of ancient history and philosophy. No one was better skilled than Ferguson in duly blending the abstract and the concrete, and modifying the deductions of speculation by the facts of history and observation. With him Ethics, Politics, and History, went hand in hand, in turn illustrating and borrowing light from each other. His politics are, indeed, but his ethical doctrines applied to society; while in the masterly sketches of character scattered over the pages of his *Roman Republic*, the same moral doctrines stand out in all the relief and interest of individual portraiture.[1]

As a moral teacher Ferguson was great. He conjoined the simplicity, elevation, and ethical hardihood of the early Roman with Grecian refinement and eloquence. He had an instinctive sympathy for the grand and ennobling in moral doctrine; and guided by his own lofty nature and feelings, more than by profound speculative insight, he sketched an ideal of human virtue that approached the dignity and grandeur of the ancient Stoical model. His ethical doctrine was one, indeed, hardly to be looked for in the existing state of abstract speculation in Scotland, and but little in harmony with the temper of the times. But Ferguson drew his inspiration from the past. His sympathies were with the nobler minds of antiquity. His speculation in spirit, form, and results, is that of an ancient moralist of the best school. An early life spent in camps and on battle-fields, had, moreover, taught many stirring lessons to the meditative moralist. Experience of the changing fortunes, and the varied contingencies of war, strengthened his natural leaning to a morality severe and self-sufficient. His teaching was in great measure an inculcation of the need of the warrior-

[1] See, for example, the contrasted characters of Cæsar and Cato; *Roman Republic*, book iii. cap. iv.

spirit in the moral life, where a higher end than military glory, and less perishable laurels than are gathered on the bloody field, are within reach, provided only they be sought with a will and bearing as resolute and unflinching as are demanded in the service of the lower ambition.

The Ethics of Ferguson formed a marked contrast to the utilitarian doctrine which issued legitimately from the principles of Locke. His prelections undoubtedly contributed to cherish, in the Metropolitan University, that better spirit of speculation which was now rising in Scotland. With his colleague Stevenson, he fully appreciated the importance of the doctrines of Reid's *Inquiry*. He formed an able and influential, while independent coadjutor of the latter, in advancing the cause of a deeper and purer moral doctrine than was compatible with the approved speculative principles of the times.[1]

The only detail of any interest recorded of Mr. Stewart's career as a student in the University of Edinburgh, is the fact that his taste and capacity for purely philosophical studies was regarded both by Stevenson and Ferguson as the most marked

[1] Ferguson's ethical system is fully and eloquently expounded in the digest of his lectures published under the title of *Principles of Moral and Political Science*. See also his *Institutes* for the use of students. The *Principles* were translated into French; Paris, 1821, 2 vols. 8vo. The moral and political doctrines of Ferguson are ably reviewed by M. Cousin in his *Histoire de la Philosophie Morale,—Ecole Ecossaise. Leçons* x. xi. (Paris, 1840.) See also *Revue Encyclopéd.* vol. xi. p. 289.

Ferguson's restriction of the sphere of Moral Philosophy to the proper ethical problems was worthy of the closer imitation of succeeding speculators. *Principles*, vol. i. Introduction, part i. cap. ii. § 14.

Ferguson, while holding with Reid that the notion of Rightness is not resolvable into utility, or to be derived from sympathy or a moral sense, goes a step beyond both Reid and Stewart in the inquiry which he raises regarding the definite nature and ground of Rightness itself. His solution of this question, by the theory of activity and perfection, must, in a speculative point of view, be admitted to want precision, though, regarded practically, it is eminently valuable.

Ferguson, however, it should be noticed, has the merit, among Scottish philosophical writers, of recognising the place and importance in ethical speculation of the Aristotelic doctrine of the pleasurable—a grand and fertile, but little illustrated principle. The applications which he makes of this doctrine, though by no means exhaustive, are both numerous and valuable. Before Ferguson, Alexander Gerard of Aberdeen, an accomplished thinker, had to some extent applied the same luminous principle to Æsthetics, in his *Essay on Taste*, first published in 1759.

feature of his intellectual character. This natural tendency was more fully developed and confirmed, as we shall presently see, after the termination of his studies in Edinburgh, by attendance on another and more distinguished philosophical instructor in a different university.

Mr. Stewart, at one period of his college studies, appears to have entertained the design of seeking an appointment in India, in the Company's corps of engineers. This purpose was, however, early abandoned, as we find that, about the year 1771, his thoughts were turned towards the Church of England.[1] The University of Glasgow, then, as at present, afforded facility to young men of talent and application, for pursuing a course of study at Oxford. Stewart went to study at Glasgow, (1771-2,) partly with a view to the Snell foundation, but also, influenced by the recommendation of Ferguson, that he might enjoy the privilege of the prelections of Thomas Reid—a name destined to become familiar among reflective men of his own and other lands, and already respected in Scotland.

Reid's philosophical position in Scotland is so closely connected with the main work of the life of his most illustrious pupil, that it is necessary to say a few words respecting the elder thinker and his teaching.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, and before the appearance of the *Inquiry*, Scotland was not without original thinkers, who aimed at positive speculative results, though labouring within comparatively narrow spheres. At an early period of the century, Gerschom Carmichael ably commented on Puffendorf, and taught with much success in Glasgow.[2]

[1] From brief notice (in MS.) of Mr. Stewart's early life by his brother-in-law, and through life one of his most valued and attached friends, the late Dugald Bannatyne, Esq., Glasgow.

[2] S. Puffendorfii *De Officio Hominis et Civis Juxta Legem Naturalem*, Libri Duo. Supplementis et Observationibus in Academicæ Juventutis usum auxit et illustravit Gerschomus Carmichael, Philosophiæ in Academia Glasguensi Professor. Ed. sec. Edinburgi, 1724. Carmichael was originally an alumnus and regent of St. Andrews, and for some time minister of Monimail in Fife.

Carmichael was also the author of a System of Natural Theology—the outlines of prelections for the use of his students. It is entitled, "*Synopsis Theologiæ Naturalis, sive Notitiæ de Existentia, Attributis, et Operationibus Summi Numinis, ex ipsa rerum Natura*

Francis Hutcheson, Professor of Moral Philosophy, in the same University, from 1729 to 1747, was distinguished by the refinement and elevation of his ethical and æsthetical doctrines. He sought his conclusions by observation of facts, not in the way of deduction from abstract principles vulgarly accepted. Hutcheson appears to have been the first Scottish thinker who, by substituting observation for a purely formal method of philosophical inquiry, fairly raised the current thought above the region of merely technical definition, and placed men with awakened sympathies in contact with life and reality. Without openly disclaiming the received metaphysical principles of the time, his analysis yet revealed elements that, if fairly weighed, were subversive of a sensuous theory of knowledge. Hutcheson struck with firm hand the key-note of Scottish speculation. His teaching, distinguished by freshness of thought, loftiness of moral tone and eloquence, was a great power in Scotland for nearly twenty years.

While Hutcheson was teaching in Glasgow, amid wide and well-deserved renown,[1] Andrew Baxter, an obscure private tutor, was cultivating reflective science, with little stimulus to the study beyond his natural love of it. His *Inquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul*[2] displays much metaphysical power. In this work he acutely contends for the immateriality of the soul, opposes Locke on certain important points, and offers a polemic against the idealism of Berkeley.[3] Henry Home, (1696-1782,) better known as Lord Kames, an acute

haustæ. Auctore Gerschomo Carmichael, Philosophiæ in Academia Glasguensi Professore. Edin. 1729, (pp. 94). Carmichael's course of lectures was divided into two parts; the one portion embraced Moral Philosophy—for the sphere of Natural Jurisprudence, as defined in the Manual of Puffendorf, is nearly identical with that of Ethics; the other was devoted to Natural Theology.—Compare Stewart's *Works*, vol. i., *Dissertation*, i. sect. 3.

[1] The Town-Council of Edinburgh offered the chair of Moral Philosophy to Hutcheson, when vacant by the resignation of Pringle, in 1745. The honour was declined.

[2] Second Edition in 1737.

[3] Baxter's critique of Berkeley shows much acuteness, and considerable appreciation of the legitimate results of his doctrine.—See Baxter's *Inquiry*, pp. 308, 309; compare Reid, *Int. Powers*, Essay ii. p. 285; where his criticism of Berkeley is identical with that of Baxter, except that Reid restricts his inference from the scheme to the non-reality of the intelligences around us; whereas

and original thinker, in his *Essays upon the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion*, (1751,) made close approximation to the special doctrines of Reid. Home had the advantage of writing subsequently to the *Treatise of Human Nature*. He controverts the theory of human knowledge which that work assumes, contending for a deeper source of knowledge than mere experience, and asserting the simple, ultimate, and intuitive character of our beliefs regarding a material world, substance, cause, the uniformity of nature, self-existence, personal identity, and the existence of Deity.[1] Adam Smith, the immediate predecessor of Reid in the Chair of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow, greatly contributed to the diffusion of a taste for mixed philosophical studies. In Smith were conjoined qualities rarely found together. In addition to highly-cultivated taste and no mean speculative talent, Smith possessed practical wisdom, which, applied to political science, left results that progressing civilisation was alone able fully to appreciate. His Lectures on Morals are embodied in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759)—a work which, despite its slight and im-

Baxter maintains that its fair issue is absolute egoism.

Baxter, moreover, in two passages, touches very closely, if, indeed, he does not positively state, the doctrine of an immediate perception of matter, and that in its latest and most refined form. As percipient of parts, we are, according to Baxter, conscious at once of our own reality as intelligences, and of the existence of matter in the form of an extended sensory.—"If our ideas have no parts, and yet if we perceive parts, it is plain we perceive *something more* than our own perceptions. But both these are certain: we are conscious that we perceive parts, when we look upon a house, a tree, a river, the dial-plate of a clock or watch. *This is a short and easy way of being certain that something exists without the mind.* We are certain of this from *consciousness itself;* since we are as certain that we perceive parts as that we have perceptions at all. And this argument proves at once, and *from the same perceptions*, the existence of *both the parts* of our composition; and, therefore, makes *the existence of both equal'y certain.* Our ideas, as they are in the mind, are without parts; and as they make us conscious of perceiving parts, *we are conscious that an extended object exists without the mind*, where the extended image is exhibited, viz., an extended sensory. Our very sensations, and the faculty of imagination, as much prove the existence of the sensory, as they prove the existence of the sensitive being."—*Inquiry*, p. 333; Cf. p. 319, N. S.; and Hamilton's *Reid*, p. 881.

[1] *Essays*, &c., part ii.; especially Essays i., ii., iii., iv., vi., vii. Home has been justly censured on the ground of an excessive multiplication of first principles.

perfect ethical doctrine, will continue to be read with delight and admiration so long as the taste for liberal studies subsists in these islands.

But the labours of all those thinkers, taken together, though reflecting in many aspects the national character and tendencies, were insufficient to effect a radical change in the philosophical teaching of the Universities, or to confer a distinctive character on speculative thinking in Scotland. Hutcheson and Smith were moralists, not metaphysicians; and in morals neither of them left a doctrine fitted to command permanent assent. Baxter and Home were without academical position. Their doctrines were, in many instances, eccentric; and their mode of dealing with philosophical questions was too narrow to enable either to become a central power in speculation. In none of these thinkers do we find any general determination of the object, method, and limits of philosophy, or an adequate appreciation of the fundamental question—the origin, nature, and bounds of human knowledge. None of them consequently had breadth or force sufficient to constitute a school, or originate a Philosophy, properly so called.

That, since the time of Descartes, Modern Speculative Philosophy received its greatest impulse and development, through the labours of David Hume, is the commonplace of history. The *Treatise of Human Nature*, (1739-40,) the unparalleled effort of a youth who had not reached his twenty-fifth year, excited earnest philosophical activity, first in the country of its production, and subsequently in other lands. This work had the twofold effect of placing broadly before the view of thinking men in the eighteenth century, the true speculative problem, and manifesting the inadequacy of the current theory of human knowledge as a solution of that problem. Around the *Treatise*, its principles and results, the conflict of speculation has been waging for more than a hundred years; nor has the movement thus originated spent all its force. Hume, measured not by the narrow, and to him inapplicable, standard of the positive doctrines he has left, but by the speculative efforts his

writings have called forth—the true test of intellectual power,—stands in the first rank of thinkers.

Hume's speculative talent seems to have gained maturity at a leap, long before he reached manhood. Nor did any of his subsequent efforts in philosophy manifest the vigour of the *Treatise of Human Nature.* In his case, indeed, the ordinary course of human experience was reversed. He appears to have awoke to a consciousness, not of the concrete, but of the abstract. His youth and early manhood passed away without his showing the slightest interest in the outward world of mankind and nature. During this early period, his power rose in intensity as it was narrowed in application. It was not until a comparatively late period of life that the irksomeness of restraint, and the deep feeling of unrest which was the issue of his speculative labours, burst the self-imposed barriers of the solitary thinker, and drove him outwards to the concrete sciences of politics and history.

Hume's character, as a thinker and a man—his far-reaching subtlety, his self-reliant and unimpassioned nature, his speculative disregard, amounting to disdain, of human interests and beliefs,—when these stood in the way of the deductions of a vigorous but narrow ratiocination—are manifest in his philosophical writings. The destruction of no interest of man, however lofty—the annihilation of no belief, however deeply-rooted or sacred—swayed this intrepid thinker from the onward march of a demonstration, which issued in banishing from the sphere, both of human knowledge and existence, all transcendent reality, be it Self, Matter, or God, as mere fictions of the imagination, and yielding, when fully analysed, the truly contradictory. The last result of Hume's speculation is, in brief, that beyond *consciousnesses*—call them impressions or ideas—there is absolutely no reality. Existence is thus limited to the subjective or ideal, and reduced to the category of the successive; for consciousnesses are only realised by us under the condition of succession, and consequently of variety. There is, therefore, no one being, no abiding reality, whether Self, or Not-Self, be the latter Matter or God. What *is*, is simply what appears, *i.e.*, phæno-

menal, many and various. Man has thus no assurance either of his existence, in any proper sense, or of his identity. He cannot vindicate for himself a reality as contradistinguished from the sum of existence around him. With man's personality, the foundation of morals and theology is, of course, entirely removed.

A quarter of a century elapsed between the publication of the *Treatise of Human Nature* and the appearance of the *Inquiry into the Human Mind*, (1764.) During that period Reid meditated, at first in the quiet seclusion of New Machar, and then as Professor of Philosophy in King's College, Aberdeen, the empirical theory of human knowledge and its issues in the writings of the great sceptic. The publication of the *Inquiry*, after a long course of patient and almost unaided reflection, was the modest announcement that he had reached results, in a vindication of the fundamental truths common to Metaphysics, Morals, and Theology, which afforded a resting-place for really earnest and thoughtful minds in their struggle with the doubts and difficulties of speculative inquiry.

In 1764, Reid was transferred from King's College, Aberdeen, to Glasgow. He was now expounding, in the Chair of Hutcheson and Smith, those doctrines which, by exemplifying, and, we may say, inaugurating, a philosophical method, at once independent and restrained, were destined not only to give a fresh impulse and a distinctive aspect to speculative science in his own country, but to exercise a permanent influence on its future course in other lands.

Reid's teaching was well fitted to arrest and influence an ingenuous mind that was awaking to a life of reflection, and to a sense of the philosophical need of the times. Throughout its entire course, it was a polemic against Locke, Berkeley, and Hume —the three philosophers with whose writings he was certainly best acquainted. His lectures, clear and simple, without technicality, nice refinement, formal distinctions, or systematic perfection, inculcated doctrines which were the fresh products of his own vigorous reflection. Those doctrines he aimed at exhibiting merely as legitimate grounds of assurance in regard to

realities which the philosophy he combated cast beyond the pale of knowledge and existence.[1] His teaching had all the impressiveness that attends the simple statement of great principles by a thinker too thoroughly in earnest to be led astray by the love of paradox, the ambition of system, or the vain desire of intellectual renown. Meaner motives than a love of truth and virtue had no influence on Reid. At first accepting the system of philosophy which he afterwards so powerfully combated, his distrust of its truth was inspired by the discovery that its results were in direct antagonism to the postulates of his moral and religious life. It was this which roused the speculative genius of Reid. The spring of his reflection was the need he felt of satisfying the demands of a full and healthy development of the practical life. This was at once the source and the limit of his speculative efforts. The ultimate point he sought was a ground on which to vindicate the full and unrestrained action of man's moral and religious instincts.[2] This peculiar source of his reflection gave a tone of very marked elevation to his whole teaching; and at every step in its course there was revealed, not only the thinker, but the man—grave, earnest, and pure—seeking to recall to human nature that harmony, the absence of which set it at variance with itself and with God.

The life, earnestness, and individuality which characterised the teaching of Reid, afforded a marked contrast to the dull tradition of Sensationalism which the Scottish Universities, during the first half of the century, and up to his time, had in general dispensed as Metaphysics. Sensationalism, as a philosophical theory, is at no time very vital. In Scotland, however, it had been long worse than dead, carefully laid in the swathing of compends that preserved only the cold and chilling lineaments of the original.[3] By a spirit of independence,

[1] See Stewart's *Works*, vol. x. *Life of Reid*, pp. 263, 264.

[2] In this aim Reid is at one with Kant in his analysis of the Practical Reason. But Reid did not, like Kant, ground speculative truths on moral convictions as simply conditions demanded by the latter; according to Reid, they are given as direct revelations of intelligence, and thus of co-ordinate authority with the moral data themselves.

[3] The reader may be referred to the

yet moderation and circumspection, tempered confidence in human Reason, solidity, and reverence for moral and religious interests, the teaching of Reid strongly reflected what is best, and, at the same time, most deeply rooted, in the national character of Scotland.

Such was the master, and such in general the character of philosophical doctrine in Scotland, when Dugald Stewart, in his nineteenth year, with strong tendencies to reflective study, attended the lectures delivered in the Chair of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow. No pupil ever caught the spirit of a master more fully, or more intelligently appreciated his method of philosophical inquiry. During a long life consecrated to reflection, Stewart nourished that spirit in Scotland, and continued the application of the same method to speculative science; and won by his accomplishments as a teacher and writer, a wider interest and fuller acceptance for philosophical doctrines than they had before experienced in Britain.

An Essay on Dreaming, written during his attendance on the lectures of Reid, in Glasgow, and afterwards incorporated in the *Elements*,[1] appears to have been the first fruits of Mr. Stewart's philosophical talent. The chief part of this discussion differs little, as it appears in the *Elements*,[2] from the form which it originally possessed, and is a fine specimen of methodical investigation. It shows that the writer was already accustomed to careful and minute observation of psychological phænomena, and thoroughly imbued with the spirit and method that characterised the philosophical investigations of Reid. It is, moreover, remarkable, as containing in germ several doctrines which, more fully developed afterwards, occupy an important place in Mr. Stewart's system, and which, while relating to the opinions

Elements of Logic of William Duncan, Marischal College, Aberdeen, as a specimen of the philosophical nourishment afforded by the Universities to the youth of Scotland in the first half, and even beyond the middle of the century. This summary of Locke, for it is little more, had reached a sixth edition in 1770. The abridgment of Locke by Bishop Wynne, was, as is well known, a highly popular text-book in the Scottish Universities about the same period.

[1] *Works*, vol. ii., *Elements*, vol. i. chaps. iii. v. sects. 3, 5.

[2] *Works*, vol. ii., *Elements*, vol. i. chap. v. sect. 5.

of Reid, and in fact suggested by them, yet involve modifications of the views of that thinker.

Mr. Stewart has the following note in reference to the Essay now mentioned. The whole circumstance is of great interest, as shewing at how very early a period Mr. Stewart's powers were developed in all their distinctive peculiarities:—

"The foregoing observations on the state of the mind in sleep, and the phenomena of dreaming, were written as long ago as the year 1772; and were read (nearly in the form in which they are now published) in the year 1773, in a private literary society in this university.[1]

"The phenomena of dreaming may perhaps form an article not altogether useless in the natural history of man, inasmuch as they contribute to attract our attention to those intellectual powers from which it is so apt to be withdrawn by that external world, which affords the first, and (for the common purposes of life) the most interesting field for their exercise. In my own case, at least, this supposition has been exactly verified, *as the speculations concerning the human mind, which I have ventured to present to the public, all took their rise from the subject to which this note refers.* The observations which I have stated with respect to it in the text (excepting a very few paragraphs since added) were written at the age of *eighteen*, and formed a part of the *first* philosophical essay which I recollect to have attempted. The same essay contained the substance of what I have introduced in chapter third, concerning the belief accompanying conception, and of the remarks stated in the third section of chapter fifth, on the extent of the power which the mind has over the brain by its thoughts. When I was afterwards led professionally, at the distance of many years, to resume the same studies, this short manuscript was almost the only memorial I had preserved of these favourite pursuits of my early youth; and from the views which it recalled to me, insensibly arose the analysis I have since undertaken of our intellectual faculties in general."[2]

[1] The Speculative.

[2] *Elements*, vol. i. Note O, pp. 490-494, referring to p. 305—*Association* (part i. *As to the Mental Train*, sect. 5.) The

While pursuing his studies in Glasgow, Stewart belonged to a literary society connected with the University, before which he read the paper on Dreaming, now referred to.[1] He was also for several years (1772-1775) an active member of the Speculative Society of Edinburgh. Besides taking a prominent part in the weekly debates, he read before the Society essays on the following subjects, all highly indicative of the early bent of his mind to philosophical studies, viz.:—Dreaming (the paper already mentioned); the Causes and Effects of Scepticism; Taste; the Conduct of Literary Institutions, with a view to Philosophical Improvement.[2] Stewart thus, like most men who have risen to eminence in Scotland during the last hundred years, underwent in his youth the discipline of a college society. Such institutions have, from the middle of the eighteenth century, formed an important educational element in several of the Scottish Universities, more particularly in Edinburgh. They are the modern substitute for the ancient and valuable practice of public academical disputation, and are, at the same time, free from several of its defects. It is in them, moreover, that a general college life is chiefly nourished, for which there is no

latter part of this note was written in 1802. Compare *Elements*, vol. i. chap. i. p. 91, where Mr. Stewart mentions that his speculative curiosity was awakened at a very early age, in reference to the connexion of mind and body.

In the *Dissertation* (Part i. p. 133) is given what seems the scroll of a letter to Reid, with reference to the subject of *visible figure*—the nature of our perception of which is discussed in Reid's *Inquiry*. This letter was probably written about the time Mr. Stewart first read the *Inquiry*, and consequently at an early period of his studies.

[1] Among the contemporary members of this Society were two of Stewart's fellow-students, both of whom rose to distinction in after years, viz., Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster, the well-known editor of the *Statistical Account of Scotland*, and William Adam, afterwards Lord Chief Commissioner of the Jury Court in Scotland. Mr. Dugald Bannatyne, in the MS. notice of Mr. Stewart already referred to, mentions, that being present, when a mere boy, in company with his friend, at a meeting of the Society, he was greatly struck with the manner and bearing of Adam, who occupied the chair.

At the meeting of Mr. Stewart's friends, held in Edinburgh (July 12th, 1829), preparatory to the erection of a monument to his memory, the Lord Chief Commissioner referred to the circumstance of his having been present at the meeting of the Literary Society when the juvenile essay was read, and to the powerful impression it made on the members.

[2] *History of the Speculative Society of Edinburgh*, pp. 115, 116.

provision in the constitution of Universities in Scotland; while the variety and general character of the topics of discussion and essay keep the minds of young men in freer and broader action than is possible in the pursuit of purely academical studies.

In Glasgow, Stewart and Archibald Alison, afterwards known to the world as the accomplished author of the *Essays on Taste*,[1]

[1] *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste*, 1790. The edition of 1810 was dedicated to Mr. Stewart. This work has exercised very considerable influence on the course of speculations on the Beautiful in Scotland. The *Essays* were, moreover, translated into German (so early as 1792), with critical remarks, by Heydenreich, Professor of Philosophy at Leipsic, and author of a system of *Æsthetik*. Alison's work, in more recent times, furnished the æsthetical principle of Jeffrey and Brown. Though published after Reid's speculations on the subject had been given to the world, his estimate of the work has been preserved. Reid thus refers to it in a letter to the author:—"I have read it with much pleasure . . . I think your principles are just, and that you have sufficiently justified them by a great variety of illustrations, of which many appear new to me, and important in themselves, as well as pertinent to the purpose for which they are adduced."

Mr. Stewart makes constant reference to the *Essays* throughout his *Speculations on the Beautiful*. In the following passage, he properly discriminates the limits of association as a theory of the Beautiful, and, at the same time, states the fundamental principle of Alison's doctrine:—"The theory which resolves the *whole* effect of beautiful objects into association, must necessarily involve that species of paralogism, to which logicians give the name of *reasoning in a circle*. It is the province of association to impart to one thing the agreeable and the disagreeable effect of another; but association can never account for the *origin* of a class of pleasures different in kind from all the others we know. *If there was nothing originally and intrinsically pleasing or beautiful, the associating principle would have no materials on which it could operate.*

"Among the writers who have attempted to illustrate the influence of association on our judgments concerning the Beautiful, I do not know of any who seem to have been completely aware of the force of this objection but Mr. Alison; and, accordingly, the fundamental idea which runs through his book, and which, in my opinion, is equally refined and just, is entirely his own. He does not deny that, independently of custom and habit, there are numberless sources of enjoyment in the human frame, arising from its adaptation to the various objects around it. He only asserts, that a large proportion of the qualities which produce these pleasures, although they cannot be called beautiful, while they affect the bodily organs immediately, may yet enter largely, by means of the association of ideas, into the beauty of the visible creation."—*Phil. Essays*, vol. v. p. 243.

Sir W. Hamilton speaks of Alison's *Essays* as "a work of great ingenuity and elegance, and the first systematic attempt to explain the emotions of sublimity and beauty on the principles of association."—Reid's *Works*, p. 89.

In a letter to Dr. Alison, the son of the author, Sir William says, "His (Mr. Alison's) work on *Taste* appears to me one of the most acute and elegant

boarded in the same house. Stewart was Alison's senior by some years. Between these youths, with many tastes and sympathies in common, there sprang up an attachment of the most ardent nature. This intimacy, as befits friendship that dates from early college days, and draws nourishment from the associations of that period of life, retained throughout its entire course its first freshness and fervour. It continued unbroken until the death of Mr. Stewart.

Stewart does not appear to have studied during more than one session at Glasgow. In the autumn of 1772, he was called upon by his father, whose health was beginning to decline, to undertake the sole charge of the Mathematical Classes in the University of Edinburgh. Though Stewart entered on the work at the early age of nineteen, he conducted the classes with marked ability and success, inspiring in his pupils, according to competent testimony, the spirit and the love of study; thus manifesting, even at this early age, a singular power of influencing and moulding the minds of others, which seems to have been natural to him. His father never resumed the duties of the chair. After acting for three years as his father's substitute, Mr. Stewart was formally elected Professor of Mathematics, in conjunction with him, (June 14th, 1775,) before he had completed his twenty-second year.

we possess; though I can hardly go the length of analysing all the emotions of beauty and sublimity into phænomena of association. There can, however, be no doubt that your father was an illustrious coadjutor of Reid and Stewart, and has done much honour to the Scottish School of Metaphysics."

The subject of the beautiful is certainly one of the most difficult and refined in the whole compass of Psychology. The speculations of Reid, Alison, Stewart, and Brown, on this point, require to be supplemented, or rather to accept the groundwork afforded by those of Kant and his successors in Germany, in order to yield even an approximation to an adequate theory. The tendency of speculation in this country on the subject has been to supersede the *special* charter of the feeling of the beautiful, and, indeed, of all the æsthetical feelings, by virtually identifying them with the pleasurable feelings in general, especially with certain moral feelings. Little progress will be made towards a correct analysis either of the æsthetical feelings, or, indeed, of the feelings in general, until the Aristotelic doctrine of the pleasurable is fairly appreciated by psychologists. Association will then, and then only, assume its rightful place in æsthetics, as simply a plastic and enhancing principle.

For brief notice of Mr. Alison, see Appendix A. Note to Letter I.

In the year 1778, Professor Adam Ferguson was appointed secretary to the Commissioners who were sent to America to negotiate in regard to the points of dispute that had already led to a war between that country and Britain. Mr. Stewart consented, at Ferguson's request, to conduct the Class of Moral Philosophy in his absence. Stewart gave an original course of Lectures on Morals, (1778-9,) and after only a week's notice. He was, at the same time, engaged for three hours daily as Professor of Mathematics, giving, during the same session, a course of Lectures on Astronomy for the first time. His labours at this period were very great; and the success with which so young a man discharged duties so varied and arduous, is a high tribute to his natural powers and the extent of his acquirements. "To this season," says his son, "he always referred as the most laborious of his life; and such was the exhaustion of the body, from the intense and continued stretch of the mind, that on his departure for London, at the close of the academical session, it was necessary to lift him into the carriage."[1] Professor Ferguson resumed the duties of the chair in the following session.

In conducting the Class of Moral Philosophy, he followed the method which appears generally to have prevailed in that chair, of teaching exclusively by means of a series of lectures. Ferguson was in the habit of speaking from notes, without fully writing out his prelections.[2] Stewart adopted the same course, both when acting as substitute for Ferguson, and in after years when he himself occupied the chair. He thought out and arranged in his mind in the morning[3] (while walking backwards and forwards in a small garden attached to his father's house in the College) the matter of the lecture of the day.[4]

[1] *Memoir*, p. 6.

[2] Preface to the *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*.

[3] He was called, during this winter, at three o'clock each morning, on five days of the week.

[4] Colonel Stewart's *Memoir*, p. 5. Mr. Stewart continued during life the practice of thinking out what he was about to write on any subject, while walking. When preparing his works for the press, during his residence at Kinneil, he usually walked backwards and forwards in the large dining-room

This method of address, and the whole circumstances of his position, were favourable to the display of Stewart's peculiar powers of developing speculative doctrines with those accessories of appropriate illustration and analogy, and the resources of a graceful, copious, and flexible diction, of which he was so great a master. His powers were now beginning to expand in their first freshness and ardour, and were submitted to less restraint than was imposed by an increasingly fastidious taste on their later exercise. It is not, therefore, matter of surprise if, even in his later days of more matured thinking, and amid the splendid triumphs of a more chastened oratory, some who were privileged to listen to him at both periods, were disposed to accord to the earlier effort the palm of greater vivacity, force, and impressiveness.

The theory of Stewart's success as a lecturer in morals, as well in this his first and almost extemporaneous effort, as at a later period of his career, is given, even to the minutest details, by Cicero, when he says:—"Rerum copia verborum copiam gignit; et, si est honestas in rebus ipsis de quibus dicitur, existit ex rei natura quidam splendor in verbis. Sit modo is, qui dicet aut scribet, institutus liberaliter educatione doctrinaque puerili, et flagret studio, et a natura adjuvetur, et in universorum generum infinitis disceptationibus exercitatus, ornatissimos scriptores oratoresque ad cognoscendum imitandumque delegerit; nae ille haud sane, quemadmodum verba struat et illuminet, a magistris istis requiret: ita facile in rerum abundantia ad orationis ornamenta sine duce, natura ipsa, si modo est exercitata, labetur."[1]

In 1783, Mr. Stewart visited Paris for the first time, in com-

of the mansion, or in the avenue, under the shade of its stately trees, meditating what he was about to write. He then retired to his study, and committed to writing, without break, what he had thus previously arranged in his mind. He spoke as well as composed with great ease, accuracy, and finish.

From the following passage in a letter to his friend, M. Prévost, (1798,) it would, however, appear, that he was an assiduous corrector of the press:—"The very great alterations and corrections which I have always been in the habit of making during the time that the printing of my books was going on, put it out of my power to let anything I write out of my hands till it has undergone the very last revisal."

[1] *De Oratore*, l. iii. c. 31.

pany with his friend Lord Ancram, afterwards sixth Marquis of Lothian. Of the particulars of this visit no record has been preserved.

On his return to Scotland, in the autumn of the same year, he married Helen, daughter of Neil Bannatyne, Esq., Glasgow, the object of an early and prolonged attachment. Mrs. Stewart died in 1787, leaving an only child, afterwards Lieutenant-Colonel Matthew Stewart,[1] on whom his father's affection centred with a peculiar intensity. The *Memoir* which Colonel Stewart has left is a discriminative and affectionate tribute to a father whom he revered, and whose memory, even during the clouded years of the latter portion of his life, he cherished with a feeling akin to idolatry.

[1] Matthew Stewart entered the army in 1804, as lieutenant in the Royal Engineers. He went to India as aide-de-camp to the Earl of Minto, where he was allowed to exchange from the Engineers into the Line. He obtained a company in the 22d Foot. He was subsequently aide-de-camp to Lord Moira, who became Governor-General of India in 1812. He received his Lieutenant-Colonelcy in 1816, and served for some time with his regiment, the York Rangers, in the West Indies. In 1819 he became Lieutenent-Colonel of the 10th Foot; and after continuing with his regiment for a few years, retired on half-pay. He obtained the rank of Colonel in 1837; and was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and member of the Asiatic Society of Calcutta. Colonel Stewart died in 1851. He was the author of several able pamphlets. Among these are the following:—

1. *Considerations on the Policy of the Government of India.* 1826.
2. *On the State and Policy of the Nation.* 1828.
3. *A Letter to the Earl of Lauderdale on the subject of his Three Letters to the Duke of Wellington.* 1829.
4. *Remarks on the Present State of Affairs.* 1830.
5. *Examination of the Ministerial Plan of Reform.* 1831.

CHAPTER II.

Mr. Stewart appointed to the Chair of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh—The comprehension of his course of teaching—Its grounds—Stewart as a lecturer—His personal appearance and manner in the Chair—His general aim as a philosophical thinker and teacher—His view of the nature and conditions of human perfection—Its importance—His characteristics as a thinker, and special qualifications as a teacher of philosophy—The nature and extent of his influence—His Lectures on Politics proper and Political Economy—Comprehension of Political Economy—His aim and influence as a political speculator—Students of Political Economy.

Mr. Stewart continued in the Chair of Mathematics for some years longer.[1] On the resignation of Adam Ferguson in 1785, he was transferred to the Chair of Moral Philosophy. This was his appropriate sphere, and the scene of a most brilliant and successful course of academical teaching—an art of which there have been but few masters.

From his appointment to the Chair of Moral Philosophy in 1785, until his retirement from active academical duty in 1810—that is, for a quarter of a century—Mr. Stewart exercised, by his teaching alone, without taking into account the concurrent and more general impression made by his published writings, a wide, powerful, and peculiarly elevating and refining influence. His popularity as a lecturer increased to the last. Among his students were to be found, not only the youth of Scotland, but many, and these of the highest rank, from

[1] He appears to have found the routine of mathematical teaching but little congenial. In a letter to his friend Mr. Alison, without date, but probably written in 1782, he says, "I am somewhat in low spirits at the prospect of winter, particularly at the thought of teaching Euclid for the *thirteenth* time."

England. The continent of Europe, and America, likewise furnished a large proportion of pupils.[1]

The sphere of investigation which Mr. Stewart proposed to himself in the Chair of Morals, was far from being limited by the science of Ethics proper. His fundamental principle of the organic unity of the sciences he designated *philosophical*, as opposed to *physical*, precluded the isolated prosecution of any individual science, or part of the whole. In his view those sciences are branches whose life and nourishment spring from a single root; and, like the tree of the forest, or the flower of the field, only attain the fulness of healthy development, and perfect symmetry, by growth that is simultaneous and harmonious. In speculation, as in true practical development, we must, according to Stewart, seek simultaneously to evolve a totality, just as nature in her perfect works, "rudimenta partium omnium simul parit et producit." While scrupulously faithful to the observational and inductive method of Reid, and agreeing with that thinker in regarding the facts or phænomena of mind as the object of a real and independent science, Stewart marks with even greater emphasis than his master, the need of the application of that method to the phænomena in their totality. The first, proper, and adequate object of philosophical inquiry is, as he repeatedly tells us, "human nature considered as one great whole," *i.e.*, in the sum of its phænomena. This is the foundation of what, according to Stewart, is the ultimate aim of speculation, viz., the determination of the various special ends and methods of the sciences, *philosophical* and *physical*, and the analysis, as far as is legitimate, of the ground of our certainty regarding *réal* existence as well as purely *formal* truth; or, to use his own language, the constitution of a Rational Logic. The conjoint

[1] Mr. Stewart gave his first course of lectures as Professor of Moral Philosophy, in 1785-86—number of students, 102; his last session was 1808-9—number of students, 150. During the twenty-four years he occupied the Chair, the average attendance of students on the Winter Course of Moral Philosophy alone, was 138; the lowest number being 87, and the highest 196, (1807-8.) Mr. Stewart gave Summer Courses of Lectures on Moral Philosophy, beginning in the year 1791, and terminating in 1796; the average attendance on the Summer Course was 26.

development of the philosophical sciences, besides being necessitated by the fact that certain of those sciences stand to others in a relation of subordination, and that all spring from Psychology as the root, affords one principal safeguard against error in the individual sciences themselves—for an erroneous or imperfect solution of a question in one department is made manifest, and a ground of correction afforded, by the result being found to run counter to what is independently ascertained in another. Moral data, for example, often reveal the erroneous character of conclusions in regard to Being, and, it may be, prevent us from overstepping in our Metaphysics the bounds of legitimate speculation. This general study of human nature affords, besides, the exclusive condition and the means of true liberal culture.

General Psychology is thus the centre whence the thinker goes outward to the circumference of human knowledge. Stewart did not, however, cherish the vain dream of attaining the principles of universal science, as thus defined, by individual effort, far less of reaching more than a relative and partial knowledge of existence. To contribute, as far as is possible by the labours of a single life, to the constitution of this general science, at the same time to cherish by reflective studies, a noble life in man, humble, reverent, and hopeful, and raise liberal self-culture on the basis of true self-knowledge —such is in sum Stewart's philosophical aim; an ideal first conceived in the ardour of early youth, and worthy of the fine powers which, during a long life, he religiously consecrated to its realisation.[1]

[1] Mr. Stewart has nowhere developed his view of the precise relation of Psychology to the sciences he denominates *philosophical*, nor has he fully specified the modes and degrees of dependence subsisting among those sciences. He expressly refrains, indeed, from attempting their scientific organization. He has, however, explicitly recognised the contrast of the phænomena of mind and matter, and the diverse faculties called into exercise in the study of them, as well as the kinds of science to which the investigation of the opposed phænomena gives rise. M. Jouffroy has criticised the views of Reid and Stewart on this point, and essayed to supplement them, without, however, really adding anything to what they have expressly recognised in theory, as well as proceeded on in practice. See *Œuvres de Reid*,

Besides these general and speculative grounds, there were special reasons, in the circumstances of the times, which led Mr. Stewart to give to his prelections so comprehensive a character, in particular to bestow so much space on Natural Theology, the highest branch of Metaphysics Proper. These are presented in his Preface to *The Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers*, published in 1828, the year of his death, where he says :—"Before proceeding to my proper subject, I may be permitted to say something in explanation of the large, and perhaps disproportionate space which I have allotted in these volumes to the Doctrines of Natural Religion. To account for this I have to observe, that this part of my Work contains the substance of Lectures given in the University of Edinburgh, in the year 1792-93, and for almost twenty years afterwards, and that my hearers comprised many individuals, not only from England and the United States of America, but not a few from France, Switzerland, the north of Germany, and other parts of Europe. To those who reflect on the state of the world at that period, and who consider the miscellaneous circumstances and characters of my audience, any farther explanation on this head is, I trust, unnecessary.

"The danger with which I conceived the youth of this country to be threatened, by that inundation of sceptical or rather atheistical publications which were then imported from the Continent, was immensely increased by the enthusiasm which, at the dawn of the French Revolution, was naturally excited in young and generous minds. A supposed connexion between an enlightened zeal for Political Liberty and the reckless boldness of the uncompromising free-thinker, operated powerfully with the vain and the ignorant in favour of the publications alluded to.

"Another circumstance concurred with those which have been mentioned in prompting me to a more full and systematical illustration of these doctrines than had been attempted by

Preface, S. ii. Compare Stewart's *Works*, vol. x. *Life of Reid*, pp. 278-280; *Works*, vol. ii., *Elements*, vol. i., Introduction; *Phil. Essays*, *Works*, vol. v. p. 49; *Dissertation*, *Works*, vol. i. p. 19; Hamilton's *Reid*, pp. 216-218.

any of my predecessors. Certain divines in Scotland were pleased, soon after this critical era, to discover a disposition to set at nought the evidences of Natural Religion, with a professed, and, I doubt not, in many cases, with a sincere view to strengthen the cause of Christianity. Some of these writers were probably not aware that they were only repeating the language of Bayle, Hume, Helvetius, and many other modern authors of the same description, who have endeavoured to cover their attacks upon those essential principles on which all religion is founded, under a pretended zeal for the interests of Revelation. It was not thus, I recollected, that Cudworth, and Barrow, and Locke, and Clarke, and Butler reasoned on the subject; nor those enlightened writers of a later date, who have consecrated their learning and talents to the farther illustration of the same argument. 'He,' says Locke, who has forcibly and concisely expressed their common sentiments, 'He that takes away Reason to make way for Revelation puts out the light of both, and does much the same as if we would persuade a man to put out his eyes, the better to receive the light of an invisible star by a telescope.'[1]

"This passage from Locke brought to my recollection the memorable words of Melanchthon, so remarkably distinguished from most of our other Reformers by the mildness of his temper and the liberality of his opinions: 'Wherefore our decision is this; that those precepts which learned men have committed to writing, transcribing them from the common reason and common feelings of human nature, are to be accounted as not less divine than those contained in the tables given to Moses; and that it could not be the intention of our Maker to supersede, by a law graven upon stone, that which is written with his own finger on the table of the heart.'"

On the grounds now mentioned, Mr. Stewart's lectures assumed a very wide compass. From Psychology as its centre, and with the Psychological method as its guiding principle, his course embraced Metaphysics, or the philosophy of First Principles,

[1] *Essay on the Human Understanding*, book iv. chap. xix. sect. 4.

and the application of those principles in Natural Theology; Ethics proper; the theory of Taste; Politics, including the theory of Government, and the science of Political Economy, which latterly constituted a distinct course of lectures at a separate hour. Space was also allotted to the theory of Induction and Syllogism.[1]

Mr. Stewart conducted the Class of Moral Philosophy exclusively by means of lectures[2]—the *Outlines* serving to keep in view the order and connexion of the varied and comprehensive discussions embraced in the course.[3] Tradition is unanimous in ascribing to Stewart the first place as a powerful and impressive lecturer.[4] Like his predecessor in the Chair, whom Mr. Stewart resembled in many features of character, intellectual and moral, and whose mode of teaching he appears in great measure to have followed, he was in the habit of speaking from notes, not reading lectures formally prepared and fully committed to writing. This practice, had his manner of dealing

[1] See the *Outlines of Moral Philosophy*, first published in 1793. The attention bestowed by Mr. Stewart on special topics of lecture, was regulated by the space appropriated to their discussion in his published works.

[2] Besides giving a lecture, or a spoken discourse of an hour's duration daily, during the session, so as to form a systematical discussion of the subjects proper to the Chair, Mr. Stewart was in the habit of prescribing, at least during the earlier part of his professorial teaching, subjects of essay in connection with the class. Walter Scott, while a student of Moral Philosophy, recommended himself to the notice of the Professor by an Essay on "The Manners and Customs of the Northern Nations."

[3] The *Outlines* have been happily characterised by Jouffroy as "a text-book of meditations on the most important points of the science of man."—*Esquisses de Philosophie Morale.* Traduit de l'Anglais, par Th. Jouffroy. Paris, 1826. Préface du Traducteur, p. 151. This translation of the *Outlines*, with the Preface by the translator, was at once a cause and the sign of the progress of a more elevated philosophy than had before prevailed in France. Cf. Cousin, *Fragmens Philosophiques*, which contain a detailed analysis and appreciation of the *Outlines*.

[4] Were it needed, reference might be made to the express testimonies of Scott, Horner, Jeffrey, Thomas Brown, Cockburn—all pupils; the elder Mill, a frequent hearer, and Sir James Mackintosh. The least elaborate, but by no means the least emphatic testimony to Stewart's powers as a lecturer, is the saying of the late Dr. John Thomson, Professor of General Pathology in the University of Edinburgh, who adorned eminent professional attainments by the higher accomplishment of liberal studies—viz., that the two things by which he was most impressed in the course of his life, were the acting of Mrs. Siddons, and the oratory of Dugald Stewart.

with philosophical questions been more exact and dogmatic than it really was, would not have so well secured the ends of his course. It was, however, unquestionably the mode of lecturing best adapted to his peculiar powers. It allowed full scope to his imagination and feelings, and left him to the free course and ready promptings of an eloquence which he knew so well to vary, in harmony with the tenderness, the grace, or the sublimity of his theme.[1]

Stewart's aim and influence as a teacher of philosophy was doubtless less purely speculative than moral and practical. His lectures do not appear any more than his writings[2] to have formed exhaustive discussions of the more abstract philosophical questions. Merely to make thinkers, or to offer a speculative system complete in all its parts, was entirely foreign from his aim, whether as a teacher or writer. Observational rather than severely analytic, or deductive, dealing with facts

[1] The author of the *Memorials of his Time*—a student of Stewart's moral and political courses about the beginning of the present century—has left a graphic portraiture of his personal appearance and manner in the class-room. The affectionate and admiring tribute to Mr. Stewart, of which this sketch is a part, confers honour alike on master and pupil.

"Stewart," says Lord Cockburn, "was about the middle size, weakly limbed, and with an appearance of feebleness which gave an air of delicacy to his gait and structure. His forehead was large and bald, his eyebrows bushy, his eyes grey and intelligent, and capable of conveying any emotion from indignation to pity, from serene sense to hearty humour; in which they were powerfully aided by his lips, which, though rather large perhaps, were flexible and expressive. The voice was singularly pleasing; and, as he managed it, a slight burr only made its tones softer. His ear both for music and for speech was exquisite; and he was the finest reader I have ever heard. His gesture was simple and elegant, though not free from a tinge of professional formality; and his whole manner that of an academical gentleman. . . . He lectured standing; from notes which, with their successive additions, must, as I suppose, at last have been nearly as full as his spoken words. His lecturing manner was professorial, but gentleman-like; calm and expository, but rising into greatness or softening into tenderness, whenever his subject required it." See the whole passage, *Memorials*, pp. 22-26. Compare *Memoir* by Colonel Stewart, p. 8.

The portrait of Mr. Stewart, by Wilkie, an engraving from which is prefixed to the present volume, is regarded by those who knew him as a faithful likeness.

[2] His published works, with the exception, at least in great part, of the *Dissertation*, are but the leisurely and careful elaboration of the matter he made use of in lecturing.

as they are presented in their integrity rather than with their last elements, or their theoretical relations, he habitually opened up comprehensive fields of thought, and thus set the higher minds around him in a course of original speculation ; but his was not a power that subjugated intellectual activity by the boldness and force of finished philosophical theory.

Stewart's influence, indeed, regarded in a purely speculative aspect, was more powerful by what he cautioned against attempting, and suggested as a legitimate aim, than by the new and definite results which he produced. The philosophical ideal, comprehensive and yet restrained, which he constantly inculcated as the ultimate aim of the thinker, had a marvellous power over the finer minds with whom he came into contact. Nor was this wonderful, for we can conceive no nobler object of ambition, especially as presented to ardent and ingenuous youth, than the intellectual empire to which it points. To some minds, and these the finest of the race, fragmentary science, however splendid, is as nothing. They pursue always either the impossible ideal of an absolute totality in science, or such completeness as is compatible with the actual limits of human knowledge. Even this latter aim—that which Stewart indicated—is too great for actual realisation by the individual. While nothing is grander than the thought, nothing, at the same time, is meaner than the execution. But the ideal is not, on that account, the less legitimate or valuable. The completeness of science is no measure of the perfection of the man. On the contrary, individual effort is higher and more prolonged as science is remote. And if knowledge is chiefly to be prized as it affords the condition of activity, that pursuit is above all valuable which keeps a man continually in the presence of a lofty ideal, some part of which his utmost effort must still leave uncompassed. Intellectually as spiritually, we must live by faith, and in both regions our highest inspiration is from the outreaching and invisible. Nor need the thinker repine though he should have to adopt the language of one who, sitting at the feet of Stewart, felt the powerful spell, and confessed that in the pursuit of universal science he was somewhat of a visionary, conscious that he was pressing

on still short of his ideal, in some sense, "per domos vacuas et inania regna."[1] Better far for the man, through all his higher nature, to perish after a life-long struggle in so splendid a contest, than complacently wear the laurels of a hundred petty fights.

This ideal, as inductively pursued by Stewart, was in no way incompatible with the strongly concrete tendency of his thinking and teaching. In no part of his speculations, far less in his academical teaching, did he lose sight of human life, individual or social. He is everywhere severely true to the spirit and precept of the Restorer of Learning, whom he revered above all other thinkers. His contemplation is not at any time of that kind which Bacon censures "as finished in itself, without casting beams on society." On the contrary, his great philosophical aim may be said to be that of finding results bearing on the work and adornment of human life. There are indeed few aspects of human thought and feeling, more especially as exhibited under the various modifying circumstances of real life, which Stewart has not to some extent illustrated; and no thinker ever set with easier and more graceful hand the lights of higher science, amid the facts of every-day life and experience.

The principle which more immediately stimulated and guided the speculations of Stewart, and which modified his academical teaching in particular, is his view of the nature and conditions of human perfection, as capable of being realised only in the full and harmonious development of the mental powers. This, as the normal state of man, is that to which his nature spontaneously tends; and the proportion in which it is realised is the measure of man's wellbeing. Speculative philosophy is to be valued, not so much from its affording definite solutions of questions in regard to man and things, as because it is the indispensable means of human development. The highest human interest is a general culture of the faculties, intellectual, moral, and sensitive; and the philosophy of mind,

[1] Francis Horner. *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 279.

to use Stewart's beautiful analogy, affords the key that unlocks all the hidden sources of internal enjoyment.[1]

This view of the nature of the culture which is alone worthy of a man, is a great truth that is too often wholly disregarded in the interest of a narrow and blighting professional training. Yet, until this principle is recognised, man himself is ignored. Its acknowledgment is the confession of his nobility; its oblivion the symbol of his degradation. The individual really lives only in so far as he is conscious of the fact, and gives effect to the belief, that he is an end, and an end to himself. Stewart, standing as he did, in the high place of the teaching of the nation, accomplished a work that was above all price, in lending the sanction of his name, and the impulse of his powers, to the forwarding of this principle. Nor is it the solitary instance in which Stewart was the means of setting grand but forgotten truths in honour, and rescuing the near and familiar from that neglect which, in course of time, seems almost necessarily to fall upon it. The principle issues naturally from the general direction which Stewart gave to the intellectual activity of his time. It is what is obviously suggested as soon as man is recalled from wandering in the outward to the remembrance of himself—a work as difficult as it is necessary and important—for, as St. Augustine has so finely said, "Eunt homines mirari alta montium, ingentes fluctus maris, altissimos lapsus fluminum, oceani ambitum, et gyros siderum; *se ipsos* autem relinquunt, nec mirantur."

Stewart afforded in his own person a fine exemplification of the ideal perfection he loved to portray. Few men have exhibited a more harmonious development of powers, intellectual, moral, and æsthetical, or carried into reflective science a more entire humanity. In Stewart were conspicuous the refining power of liberal study, and the freedom from pedantry and one-

[1] *Phil. Essays*, *Works*, vol. v. p. 36. No one acquainted with the writings of Ferguson can fail to mark his influence on his pupil's view of the true end of man, and consequently of enlightened culture. The same great truth was in the mind of Plato when he defined philosophy as the greatest harmony (of the soul),—μεγίστη μουσική.—*Phaedo*, 61, A.

sidedness that distinguish the man who has truly imbibed the philosophical spirit. His catholicity enabled him to see and prize excellence in whatever form it appeared. There were indeed few aspects of truth, beauty, or virtue, which he was not capable of appreciating. This style of character has its own reward, in the fulness and variety of the enjoyments which it carries in its train; and few men have realised in greater degree than Stewart, the pleasures that spring from the free energies of a well-cultured mind.

Stewart's character, though a whole of exquisite grace and symmetry, is on this very account less likely to be so widely observed and appreciated as one of a greatly inferior kind. A harmonious balance of excellences is less remarked by the superficial observer than a single accomplishment amid a crowd of defects, as a solitary, though it may be an inconsiderable light, is the more apparent in an expanse of darkness, or as a circumscribed patch of green is more marked amid aridity and barrenness. The perfection and symmetry of such a character is too unobtrusive to catch the common eye, which is generally bent on the striking and outstanding. It appeals too much to the reflective intellect and cultivated imagination to become an object of wide regard or intense sympathy on the part of the crowd, just as there are harmonies of sound and colour so exquisite as to be appreciable only by the refined and purified taste.

Breadth of mental development is of the highest importance in reflective studies, more especially in General Psychology—the favourite field of Stewart—a department of inquiry affording ample scope for delicate observation and analysis, and fitted to attract the man of tranquil, refined, and comprehensive mind. In this science it is an indispensable requisite that the observer should be able to appreciate, in their integrity, the facts with which he deals. Here the chief source of error is imperfect or distorted observation. Any defect, accordingly, in the general development of the powers of the speculator, by means of which he is placed in contact with the phænomena, is a fundamental disqualification for a successful pursuit of the study. Such a constitution of mind leads to the neglect of one side of the

reality, and to the undue elevation of the other, which the observer is peculiarly qualified and disposed to remark. From these defects Mr. Stewart's teaching, as is the case with his writings, was singularly free, owing to the breadth and balance of his powers. In his philosophical discussions we may have occasionally to desiderate more searching analysis, and keener speculative insight; we have rarely to complain of exclusive and distorted observation of facts, or the building thereon of narrow and inadequate theories.

The degree to which Stewart approximated towards accomplishing a general and harmonious development of the faculties, is to be regarded as the measure of the success which he sought in his University career. It was in this sphere above all that he proposed directly to call forth and invigorate intellectual power, to animate and refine moral sensibility, to awaken and elevate the powers of taste,—in a word, to develop all that is distinctive in man, and thus to give dignity, elevation, even grandeur, to the commonplace of every-day life, by intermingling with it a permanent love of truth, beauty, and virtue, and thereby attaching the individual to what alone has worth and is imperishable. This aim Stewart justly deemed as of higher moment than even the production, if that were possible, of a finished theory of human knowledge; and it was an ideal to the realisation of which he made as near an approach as any philosophical teacher known to history. The period of attendance on the prelections of Stewart remained sacred in the mind of many a pupil, long after the quiet of the University had been exchanged for the bustle of the world, as a time of elevated converse with great themes, and the source of a refining and ennobling influence then first amalgamated with the current of life. The man—the purity and elevation of his personal character—the enlarged, liberal, and tolerant spirit which he carried into speculation—his unwavering confidence in the steady progress of humanity towards a fuller realisation of truth and virtue—his chastened eloquence and ample stores of illustrative imagery and classical reference—the thorough mastery he shewed of his powers of intellect and imagination, springing

from assiduous culture—his grace of speech and manner—the repose and dignity of his academic demeanour, not unrelieved by a vein of quiet and kindly humour—long remained in the memory of numerous pupils, scattered abroad over many lands, whom his impressive teaching first awoke to a full sense of the duty and the dignity of man, and whose higher feelings and nobler impulses he called forth and animated. In the case, indeed, of the finer minds among his pupils who most thoroughly imbibed their master's spirit, and profited most fully by his teaching, the lapse of time, as they gradually receded in the journey of life, from the era of their attendance on Stewart's prelections, served but to enhance the feeling of sacredness with which they regarded the pure spring whence, in early youth, they had drawn supplies for the needs of their opening moral and intellectual life.[1]

In the union of wisdom and eloquence—*sapienterque sentiendi et ornatè dicendi scientia*—the ideal of the philosopher which prevailed in early Greece, and which Cicero complains that Socrates was the first to sunder[2]—the only other name of the last half century which is naturally associated with Stewart is that of Cousin, the last living representative of the illustrious band of European thinkers who have constituted modern philosophy. With fundamental speculative divergences, the doctrines of Stewart and Cousin have yet a common source and character. The practical aim of these great teachers of philosophy has been virtually identical. Their eloquence springing from sensibility to the same grand themes, had a similar lofty tone and aim, and a nearly parallel popular effect. The words in which Cousin sums up the doctrine which he had inculcated for forty years, might be written of Stewart: "Our true doctrine is SPIRITUALISM, so

[1] "Dugald Stewart," says Cockburn, "was one of the greatest of didactic orators. Had he lived in ancient times, his memory would have descended to us as that of one of the finest of the old eloquent sages. But his lot was better cast. Flourishing in an age which required all the dignity of morals to counteract the tendencies of physical pursuits and political convulsions, he has exalted the character of his country and generation. No intelligent pupil of his ever ceased to respect philosophy, or was ever false to his principles, without feeling the crime aggravated by the recollection of the morality that Stewart had taught him."—*Memorials*, p. 26.

[2] *De Oratore*, l. iii. 16.

called because its character is the subordination of the senses to the Spirit, and the elevation and ennobling of Man. It teaches the spirituality of the soul, the liberty and responsibility of human actions, moral obligation, disinterested virtue, the dignity of justice, the beauty of charity, and shows a God beyond the limits of the world. . . . This philosophy is the natural ally of all good causes. It sustains religious sentiment; seconds true art, poesy worthy of the name, and a grand literature; is the stay of justice; repels alike the craft of the demagogue and tyranny; and teaches men to value and respect themselves."[1]

Mr. Stewart gave, from the commencement of his career as Professor, Lectures on Politics proper, or the theory of Government, as part of his course of Moral Philosophy.[2] A spirit of inquiry into the first principles of political science appears to have been coeval with the rise of philosophical activity in Scotland. Scottish speculative philosophy, moreover, had from the

[1] *Lectures on the True, Beautiful, and Good.* Preface, 1853.

Scottish ethical speculation contains, unfortunately, no recognition of the grand questions involved in the relation of ordinary Ethics to Christianity. The ethical system of Stewart, while of the purest kind, and recognising very fully the relation of Morals to Natural Theology, forms no exception to this remark. The great fact of man's actual condition, as the member of a lapsed world, —the peculiar ethical motives of reverence and love for a Person who has exemplified the moral law in absolute perfection, and done so in the creature's behoof, and all the questions connected with the adjustment of the results of the ordinary and of Christian Ethics,— are unnoticed by Mr. Stewart, as, in general, by Scottish ethical speculators of note. These are questions which did not, strictly speaking, fall within the scope of the moralist who was called upon to vindicate the reality and develop the character of the notions of right and wrong — the fundamental moral ideas—against the remains of an Utilitarian doctrine. They are, in fact, only possible on the basis of a pure and thoroughgoing Natural Ethics, such as is that of Stewart. The want of their recognition must, however, to some extent, deaden the vitality of any ethical system, especially in its bearings on life and action. But if these questions have not been essayed by Mr. Stewart, he has, at least, contributed largely to the preliminary work of preparing the ground, by affording data essential to their discussion. The ideal of moral perfection, after which man ought to strive, as delineated by Stewart, is essentially the Christian ideal—and exhibited from an independent point of view;—involving the recognition of a moral law of absolute or unconditioned obligation, and the need of attaching to that law, Man, who is the subject of it, both by his sense of obligation, and his feelings.

[2] *Works*, vol. ix. p. 251.

first, as its natural issue, a liberal political doctrine. The teaching of Carmichael in Glasgow appears, as already noticed, to have been in great measure political. Hutcheson, his successor, devoted a portion of his course to politics, controverting, in particular, the despotic doctrines of Hobbes.[1] From Hutcheson the practice of conjoining moral and political science seems to have passed into the University teaching of Scotland.[2] The *Political Discourses* of Hume (1752) turned the attention of his countrymen to that science, in particular to the part of it which regards the commercial polity and regulations of a nation. The *Discourses*, by their force and orginality, and the practical character of their subjects, attained a contemporary popularity at home and abroad, which their author had in vain sought by his previous productions. Though isolated discussions, these Essays of Hume contain the fundamental principles of the science, and speculators in political economy have done little since his time beyond developing and modifying his principles. It was, however, reserved for Adam Smith, a pupil of Hutcheson, but, in this respect, far more indebted to Hume than to his academical teacher, to give to the doctrines of political economy a scientific form and full development. By the force of his comprehensive genius and analytic insight, Smith united in one whole the scattered doctrines of the rising science. Smith returned from a sojourn in Paris with the young Duke of Buccleuch in 1766, after having enjoyed the privilege of intimate converse with the principal French political philosophers, some of whom were among the most accomplished men of their own or any age.[3] His familiarity with their opinions served to give breadth and steadiness to views which had first occurred to him in early life, and which, in his *Inquiry into the Nature*

[1] *Phil. Moralis*, l. iii. *Œconomices et Politices Elementa.*

[2] Politics, in the form of Natural Jurisprudence, as the more proximate study, is likely to be taken up first in the order of time. It necessarily, however, in the end, leads to Ethics, whence it draws its principles. And, in point of fact, not only in Scotland, but in Europe, the study of Ethics, in modern times, has been approached through Politics.

[3] Smith, while in Paris, became acquainted with Turgot, Quesnai, Morellet, Necker, D'Alembert, Helvetius, Marmontel, etc.

and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, (1776,) he developed in their connexion with first principles, and enforced by the resources of an ample and matured observation. Smith's work was destined gradually to revolutionise the commercial regulations of the nation, and to continue to bear fruit in a late time. Ferguson belonged to the same school of liberal politicians, and ably discussed the principles both of politics and political economy. His *Essay on the Origin of Civil Society*, and his *Lectures on Political Economy*—characterised, like his ethical speculations, by great earnestness and elevation—contributed to direct the attention of thinking men to those departments of inquiry, and to familiarise the general mind of the country with political investigations.

Stewart's first separate course of Lectures on Political Economy proper was delivered in the winter of 1800.[1] In the opening chapter of these lectures, now published for the first time, he gives the following account of the comprehension of the science :—"By most of our English writers," he says, "as well as by those in the other countries of Europe, this phrase (Political Economy) has been hitherto restricted to inquiries concerning *Wealth* and *Population ;* or to what have sometimes been called *the resources of a State.* It is in this limited sense it is used by the disciples of Quesnai in France, and also by Sir James Steuart, Mr. Smith, and a long list of respectable authors in this island, both before and after the publication of Quesnai's *Works.* Without, however, presuming to censure in the slightest degree the propriety of their language, I think that the same title may be extended with much advantage to all those speculations which have for their object the happiness and improvement of Political Society ; or, in other words, which have for their object the great and ultimate *ends* from which political regulations derive all their value ; and to which Wealth and Population themselves are to be regarded as only subordinate and instrumental. Such are the speculations which aim at ascertaining those fundamental principles of policy, which Lord

[1] The separate Course of Political Economy was continued during eight sessions, and the average number of students was forty-nine.

Bacon has so significantly and so happily described, as '*Leges legum, ex quibus informatio peti possit, quid in singulis legibus bene aut perperam positum aut constitutum sit.*'"[1] Again he says, "Among the various objects of Political Economy, one of the most important is the solution of that problem which Mr. Burke has pronounced to be one of the finest in legislation:—'To ascertain what the State ought to take upon itself to direct by the public wisdom, and what it ought to leave, with as little interference as possible, to individual discretion.'"[2]

In Politics proper, and in Political Economy, Mr. Stewart worthily sustained the liberal spirit and doctrines of his predecessors, and of the philosophical school to which he belonged. In his *Lectures on Political Economy*, Mr. Stewart accepts in general the results of the speculations of the French economists and Adam Smith, on those fundamental points in which their systems agree. In particular, with respect to the regulation of trade and industry, Stewart concurs with the Economists and Smith in advocating the freest scope for individual interest and effort, and the unrestricted exchange of the products of national industry. This is with him a corollary from his general doctrine of the propriety of fully recognising individual instincts and tendencies as normal social forces, and consequently of abstaining from legislative interference wherever it can be shown that natural principles are in themselves sufficient to realise the end which the proposed act of legislation seeks. Mr. Stewart was strongly attracted by principles of wide compass and application, and he has shown a leaning, in more than one instance, to the views of the Economists, when these do not precisely coincide with the opinions of Smith. The *Lectures on Political Economy* show no marked advance beyond the *Wealth of Nations*, with regard to positive doctrines. But they are by no means to be regarded as a mere re-statement of the views given in that work. On the contrary, with a general adherence to Smith's principles, they exhibit throughout an independent critical estimate, and modifications and corrections of the doctrines of the great economist; in particular, his theories of the compo-

[1] *Political Economy, Works*, vol. viii. pp. 9, 10.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 17.

nent parts of the price of commodities,[1] and of productive labour.[2] In some respects, moreover, Stewart sought to give to the principles of Smith a wider application than the latter had sanctioned, as, for example, in reference to the Navigation Laws.[3]

In no part of his political writings has Mr. Stewart displayed greater discrimination and higher moral courage than in his estimate of the doctrines of the French Economists. He recognised and proclaimed the significance and importance of the most valuable of their fundamental principles in Political Economy, at a time when their general doctrines were subjected in this country to the indiscriminating obloquy of an alleged revolutionary tendency; and when the excitement of political convulsions abroad, and the spirit of political rancour at home, might have intimidated a less courageous man, and shaken the convictions of a less calm and far-seeing thinker. For Stewart, though regarded by some of his contemporaries as timid in action, and somewhat too much afraid of political innovation, was, for years, despite the purity and weight of his personal character, the object of suspicion and alarm to a large section of the powerful and dominant political party, from whose views he stood aloof.[4]

[1] *Wealth of Nations*, ch. v.; *Lectures on Political Economy*, vol. i. sect. ii. p. 349.

[2] *Lectures on Political Economy*, vol. i. pp. 279-294.

[3] Only finally abolished in 1850.

[4] See below, p. lxx. *Works*, vol. ii. *Elements*, i. c. iv. sect. viii. p. 237, N. 2. pp. 240, 241. *Works*, vol. x., *Life of Smith*, sect. iv., especially Note, p. 53, Appendix, Note G. (added 1810.) *Works*, vol. viii., *Lectures on Polit. Econ.* vol. i. pp. 306, 308.—Compare Cockburn's *Memorials*, p. 85.

Stewart was by no means blind to the radical defect of the general system of the Economists, although not at that time generally, if at all, apprehended, viz., the absence of a recognition of the need and place of political freedom, as evidenced by their virtually despotic theory of government. He has carefully distinguished between the Political Economy proper of the French Economists and their doctrine of Government. While strongly reprehending the latter, he balances with steady hand the merits and defects of the former. The latest writer on this subject, and certainly one of the most enlightened, coincides with Stewart in his estimate of the Economists, and in general of the character of abstract political speculation in France before 1789. *Works*, vol. ii., *Elements*, vol. i. p. 240, Note C. Compare De Tocqueville's *France before the Revolution*, chaps. xiii., xv.

We who live in these days can hardly appreciate the debt we owe to the political teachings of Stewart. At the time when he began to give his separate course of Political Economy, the science had hardly assumed shape and definiteness in the general mind of the country; there was no adequate appreciation on the part even of the cultivated portion of the nation, either of its proper sphere, or of the importance of a scientific discussion of its topics. The doctrines of Adam Smith, though fructifying in some of the more reflective and advanced minds of the time, had made little way either with statesmen or people. Fox, as is well known, spoke slightingly of the *Wealth of Nations*. It was necessary, in fact, to vindicate a place for Political Economy, to reiterate, enforce, and carry out, in detailed application to the existing circumstances of society, the doctrines of Smith, in order to obtain a general consideration for the science, and acceptance of those doctrines. This was the chief work to which Mr. Stewart set himself in his course of Political Economy; and he certainly lent powerful aid, both by his general political speculations, and his teaching in Political Economy proper, in promoting the spread of liberal views on those subjects in Britain. His lectures on Political Economy were the only prelections of the kind at that time accessible to the youth of Britain; and, in the circumstances, almost the only, and certainly by far the most impressive, means that could be found of generally disseminating the doctrines of the science.

"The opening of these classes," says Lord Cockburn, referring to the Lectures on Political Economy, "made a great sensation. The economical writings of Hume and Smith, though familiar with the liberal youth, had so little impregnated the public mind, that no ordinary audience could be collected to whom the elements and phraseology of the science were not matters of surprise. The mere term 'Political Economy' made most people start. They thought that it included questions touching the constitution of governments; and not a few hoped to catch Stewart in dangerous propositions. It was not unusual to see a smile on the faces of some, when they heard subjects

discoursed upon seemingly beneath the dignity of the Academical Chair. The word *corn* sounded strangely in the Moral Class, and *drawbacks* seemed a profanation of Stewart's voice.

"These lectures were distinguished by the acknowledged excellences and the supposed defects of his ordinary course. Some called them superficial; a worse imperfection in Political Economy, an exact science, than in Moral Philosophy, a more diffuse one. He certainly did not involve his hearers in its intricacies; and there were dull heads to whom the absence of arithmetical columns and statistical details was as grievous a blank in the one class, as that of metaphysical subtleties was in the other. But adherence to the exposition of general principles was equally judicious in both. By chiefly exposing the edges of the veins, and directing his pupils how to explore the treasures of the mine, he at once heightened the beauty of his discourses, and awakened the ambition of his students. The result, accordingly, was the best evidence of the soundness of this plan. He supplied both young and old with philosophical ideas on what they had scarcely been accustomed to think philosophical subjects, unfolded the elements and the ends of that noble science, and so recommended it by the graces of his eloquence, that even his idler hearers retained a permanent taste for it."[1]

[1] Cockburn's *Memorials*, pp. 174-176. I have great pleasure in adding to the testimony now quoted, that of a favourite pupil, whose premature removal from the political service of his country—from his cherished schemes of intellectual conquest, and from his friends—is still mourned, even after the lapse of nearly forty years, with the poignancy of early grief. Referring to a rumour that Mr. Stewart's *Lectures on Political Economy* were to to be discontinued during session 1804-5—"I hope," says Francis Horner, "the course of Political Economy is not given up for want of students; the number, to be sure, has always been small, but then it was composed only of such as take to the subject in earnest. If peradventure there shall be twenty found there, for twenty's sake it ought to be saved. The effect which these lectures are already producing, by sending out every year a certain number who have imbibed a small portion of his spirit, is so great, that I cannot consent to any suspension of it."—*Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 298-9. Compare pp. 331-2.

Of all Mr. Stewart's pupils, Francis Horner was perhaps the one who most

Stewart's political teaching had the greater weight, inasmuch as his doctrines were presented as corollaries from elevated ethical speculations, and comprehensive views of man. They were, in fact, the carrying out, to their last results, of his psychological and moral principles. They formed the culminating point of his general scheme of philosophical doctrine. For the task, moreover, of ministering between a somewhat abstract political philosophy on the one hand, and the popular mind of the country on the other, he was peculiarly fitted, not only from his academical position, but by the general cast of his mind. He was at once philosopher and *littérateur;* the former in matter, the latter in manner and style; not so highly abstract as to be above the reach of the current mind of his time, and yet dealing so far with principles, as to occupy a modifying and commanding relation to every-day opinions, and able withal, by his personal character—especially his indisputable superiority to the interests of political faction—and his persuasive eloquence, to win for those principles of government and politics which he advocated, a general and cordial acceptance. Stewart accomplished, indeed, a great though silent and unostentatious work. Besides cherishing the better spirit in philosophy and literature that was now making itself felt in Scotland, he contributed, more than any other man of his time, to create and foster in the minds of the rising youth, not only of Scotland but of Britain, the love of political freedom, and a sense of

thoroughly imbibed the general spirit of his master, and most fully reflected in his brief but noble life, that style of character, intellectual and moral, and those lofty aims which the teaching of Stewart was calculated to create and foster. Horner is adduced, and with great truth, by Sir James Mackintosh, as an example of the school of Stewart.—(*Dissertation*, p. 387.) In his Journal and Letters, Horner makes constant reference to Mr. Stewart's teaching and writings, especially when he has occasion to refer to the history of his opinions, his aims in life, and the spirit in which he pursued them. Those references commence with the period of his attendance on Stewart's lectures, and continue almost to the moment when that love of universal knowledge, which neither professional engagements, nor the temptations of political ambition could diminish, was, after a last and melancholy outburst, about suddenly to be quenched in the grave.—See his *Memoirs and Correspondence*, especially vol. i. pp. 86, 87, 93, 94, 216, 217, 279.

the importance of an unfettered economical code. In the quiet retreat of the Metropolitan University were to be found the asylum and the nursery of the liberal opinions of the times. From the class-room of Stewart there have gone forth almost all the men whose names are now, after half a century, familiar to this generation as having helped forward the cause of liberal politics, some by their personal influence merely, others by their writings as well, and not a few by their splendid exertions on the field of practical statesmanship. The internal history of Britain, during the past half century, is in great measure the record of the slow but secure prevalence of the political principles of Smith and Stewart in the national opinion and councils; and affords a striking example of the gradual ascendency in public opinion of the speculations of the solitary thinker, which, after being neglected, or it may be contemned, finally rule the world.[1]

[1] On the catalogue of students of Political Economy, there occur, among others, the following well-known names:

Rev. Sydney Smith.

Francis Horner, (three sessions.)

Lord Webb Seymour (two sessions; the second son of the tenth Duke of Somerset. He died at the age of forty-two in 1819, after a life devoted to study, and beloved by all who knew him.—See *Memoir of Francis Horner*, vol. i. Appendix A.)

Sir George Mackenzie, (Bart. of Coul, long Vice-President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.)

Lord Sempill, (Thirteenth Baron, b. 1758, d. 1830.)

William Erskine, (Mr. Erskine accompanied Sir James Mackintosh to India in 1804. He translated the *Memoirs of the Emperor Baber*, with Preliminary Dissertation and Notes—a work which is highly prized.)

Earl of Lauderdale, (Eighth Earl, whose powerful political influence is well known. He is the author of an able work on Political Economy entitled *Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Public Wealth*, 1804. He was through life an attached friend of Mr. Stewart.)

Thomas Thomson, (afterwards Principal Clerk of the Court of Session, and to whose valuable labours under the Record Commission his country is lastingly indebted.)

John A. Murray, (afterwards Sir John, and now a Lord of Session—one of the few surviving representatives of the school and teaching of Stewart.)

Henry Reeve, M.D. of Norwich, then a medical student at Edinburgh,—author of various treatises on medical subjects.

Henry Home Drummond, of Blair-Drummond, (late Member of Parliament for Perthshire.)

Henry Cockburn, (the late Lord Cockburn.)

Francis Jeffrey, (the late Lord Jeffrey, first editor of the *Edinburgh Review*.)

Hon. Henry John Temple, (the present Viscount Palmerston.)

Henry Brougham, (Lord Brougham.)

Lord Forbes, (the Seventeenth Baron, d. 1843.)

Lord Cochrane, (the present Earl of Dundonald.)

Hon. Henry Erskine, (Dean of the Faculty of Advocates from 1786 to 1796.)

Henry Jardine, (since Sir Henry Jardine.)

Macvey Napier, (afterwards editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, and Professor of Conveyancing in the University of Edinburgh.)

George Joseph Bell, (afterwards Professor of Scots Law in the University of Edinburgh.)

Archibald Alison, (now Sir A. Alison, Bart., historian of Europe since 1789.)

W. P. Alison, (M.D., now Emeritus Professor of Medicine, Edinburgh; and author of various papers on the Management of the Poor in Scotland.)

John Cuninghame, (the late Lord Cuninghame.)

Lord Calthorpe, (Charles, Second Baron, d. 1807.)

It should be observed that the class of Political Economy comprised not merely a proportion of students who were passing through their college course, but also, and even chiefly, an audience of riper years, especially members of the bar.

CHAPTER III.

Mr. Stewart on the Continent—Second Marriage—Domestic pupils—Weekly Parties—Mr. Stewart in private life—Publication of first volume of the *Elements*—General characteristics of his Writings—Scope of his Observational Method—State of Philosophy in England towards the beginning of the century—Influence of Mr. Stewart's writings—His style—Estimate of Mr. Stewart as a writer by Sir James Mackintosh—State of political feeling in Scotland in 1794—Letter of Lord Craig to Mr. Stewart—Letter of Mr. Stewart to Lord Craig—The Leslie Controversy—Mr. Stewart appointed to the Writership of the *Edinburgh Gazette*—Accompanies Lord Lauderdale to Paris—Withdraws from active professorial duty—Dr. Thomas Brown appointed colleague and successor—His career as a lecturer, and characteristics as a speculator—Charge against Mr. Stewart in regard to his final estimate of Brown—Mr. Stewart at Kinneil—Dates of his Works—Resigns the Professorship of Moral Philosophy—John Wilson and Sir William Hamilton candidates for the Chair—Wilson appointed Mr. Stewart's successor—Letter of Mr. Stewart to Mr. James Gibson regarding the election—Mr. Stewart struck with paralysis—Account of his subsequent health—His death—Monument to his memory.

MR. STEWART spent the summers of 1788,[1] and 1789, on the Continent. During the latter he resided chiefly in Paris.

[1] During the winter of 1787-1788, Mr. Stewart, in addition to the duties of his own Chair, supplied the place of the Professor of Natural Philosophy. In a letter to Mr. Alison (1788), Mr. Stewart says, "The Natural Philosophy goes on beyond my expectation. I have already finished the Mechanics and Hydrostatics, two parts of the course to which I looked forward with some apprehension, and I have performed every experiment (even the Hydrostatic ones) with my own hands, and without breaking a single jar. I am sure I could not have done it in the presence of *two* or *three* friends, but in my public exhibitions I have found myself just as cool and collected as if I had been alone. To-morrow I proceed to Pneumatics, and am just now employed in premeditating two Lectures—the one on the Air-Pump, and the other on the Immortality of the Soul."

Mr. Stewart's colleagues in the University frequently, in the event of illness or absence, availed themselves of

He took a deep and hopeful interest in the movements of the liberal party in France, that preceded the outbreak of the Revolution. The small portion of his correspondence, beyond that of a merely formal character, that has escaped destruction, consists mainly of letters written for the most part from Paris to his friend Mr. Alison, during the years now mentioned. These, though few in number, throw light on his political views and habits of observation, and are interesting, as notes by an eye-witness of the early events of an epoch, whose momentous issues were as yet undeveloped, and, in great part, unforeseen.[1]

During his visits to the Continent, but especially to France, Mr. Stewart formed a large circle of acquaintances among men distinguished in philosophy, literature, and politics. Among his more intimate friends abroad may be mentioned M. Suard, the secretary of the Academy, and translator of Robertson's *America* and *Charles V.;* the Abbé Morellet, distinguished alike in literature and political science, for whose character Mr. Stewart had a very high regard; M. Prévost of Geneva, and the Baron de Gerando, with both of whom he corresponded; MM. Gallois, Chevalier, Guyot, De Narbonne, and Madame Gautier. Mr. Stewart also met in Paris, among others, the Duke of Rochefoucault, the grandson of the author of the *Maxims,* Baron Cuvier, and the Abbé Raynal, the well-known author of the *Histoire Philosophique des Deux Indes.*

In 1790, Mr. Stewart married Helen D'Arcy Cranstoun, third daughter of the Hon. George Cranstoun, youngest son of William, fifth Lord Cranstoun.[2] Mrs. Stewart was a lady of

his assistance in the conduct of their classes. "In addition to his own academical duties, he repeatedly supplied the place of Dr. John Robison, Professor of Natural Philosophy. He taught for several months during one winter the Greek classes for the late Mr. Dalzel, [more correctly, read the lectures of the Professor in his absence]; he more than one season taught the Mathematical classes for the late Mr. Playfair; he delivered some lectures on Logic, during an illness of Dr. Finlayson; and, if I mistake not, he one winter lectured for some time on Belles Lettres for the successor of Dr. Blair."—Col. Stewart's *Memoir,* p. 11.

[1] For a selection from these letters, see Appendix A. Mr. Stewart kept a diary while in Paris. This has unfortunately perished with the other papers. See *Works,* vol. viii., *Pol. Econ.* vol. i. p. xi.

[2] There were two children of this

high accomplishments and fascinating manners—uniting to vivacity and humour, depth and tenderness of feeling. She sympathised warmly with the tastes and pursuits of her husband; and so great was the regard of the latter for her judgment and taste, that he was in the habit of submitting to her criticism whatever he wrote.[1]

During a considerable part of his career as Professor, but more especially after his second marriage, Mr. Stewart received into his house young men, chiefly of rank and fortune, whom the state of the Continent precluded from studying abroad, and who were attracted to Edinburgh by the reputation of the University as a philosophical and scientific school. Many youths, from all parts of the kingdom, were thus brought into personal contact with Mr. Stewart, who, from their birth and position, were destined to fill the highest public stations. Though exercising only a general superintendence over the studies of those who resided under his roof, Mr. Stewart's influence in the formation both of their characters and opinions, was necessarily great. The familiarity of personal intercourse served to reveal the harmony that subsisted between the life of the man and the doctrines of the teacher, and, without lessening the admiration which he excited in the latter capacity, brought him within the circle of devoted affection.[2]

marriage—a son, George, a youth of great promise, whose death, in 1809, occasioned the deepest affliction to his parents, and, with Mr. Stewart's failing health, led to his retirement from active professional duty in the following year—and a daughter, Maria D'Arcy, who survived her father and mother, and died in 1846. Miss Stewart was endeared to a very extensive circle of friends, by the charms of a mind of great vigour and rich culture, manners the most fascinating, and a heart full of warmth, tenderness, and affection.

[1] See Appendix C. for verses by Mrs. Stewart. Mrs. Stewart died in 1838, having survived her husband ten years. One of her sisters was the Countess Purgstall, an intimate friend of Sir Walter Scott. Her brother, George Cranstoun, long one of the most distinguished members of the Scotch Bar, was raised to the bench as Lord Corehouse.

[2] Among those who resided in Mr. Stewart's house, the following names may be mentioned:—Lord Ancram, afterwards sixth Marquis of Lothian.

Basil, Lord Daer, eldest son of the Earl of Selkirk, a young man of high accomplishments. He died in 1794, before he had realised the promise of his youth.

Lord Powerscourt, fifth Viscount.

Mr. Stewart's personal character and philosophical reputation, rendered his house the resort of the best society of Edinburgh, at a time when the city formed the winter residence of many of the principal Scottish families. He exercised a remarkable ascendency over minds of the finer kind, but especially cultivated men, in the higher grades of society. Of polished and courteous, but perfectly unobtrusive manners—in an eminent sense the gentleman and the scholar—his higher and less obvious accomplishments obtained a ready recognition in circles where without adventitious aid his influence would have been greatly less powerful. Mrs. Stewart, moreover, by her accomplishments, and a wonderful power of attaching friends, was fitted to become the centre of a brilliant circle. Their weekly reunions, which happily blended the aristocracies of rank and letters, bringing together the peer and the unfriended scholar, were for many years the source of an influence that most beneficially affected the society of the capital. Those meetings, moreover, embraced, even when political zeal was at its highest, men of varied shades of opinion, and thus contributed not a little to soothe the bitterness of party feeling in Edinburgh. Colonel Stewart, referring to this period, speaks of his father's house "as the resort of all who were most distinguished for genius, acquirements or elegance in Edinburgh, and of all the foreigners who were led to visit the capital of Scotland." "So happily," it is added, "did he succeed in assorting his guests, that his evening parties possessed a charm which many who frequented them,

Mr., afterwards Sir Alexander, Muir Mackenzie of Delvin.

Lord Ashburton, son of John Dunning, the celebrated lawyer, who was created a Peer in 1782.

Lord Brooke, afterwards third Earl of Warwick.

Hon. John William Ward, only son of the Viscount Dudley and Ward, afterwards Earl of Dudley.

The present Viscount Palmerston; and his brother, the Hon. William Temple, afterwards Sir William Temple, Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of Naples.

The Right Hon. Laurence Sullivan, for many years Under-Secretary at War.

At a later period, Lord Henry Petty, (the present Marquis of Lansdowne,) Lord Webb Seymour, Lord John Russell, Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, Bart., and the Right Hon. Sir Robert H. Inglis, Bart., with several others, though not inmates of Mr. Stewart's family, were also his pupils and friends.

have since confessed they sought in vain in more splendid and insipid entertainments."[1]

The following very interesting and, I believe, truthful picture of Mr. Stewart in private life, is from the pen of his son :—

"In general company," says Colonel Stewart, "his manner bordered on reserve ; but it was the *comitate condita gravitas*, and belonged more to the general weight and authority of his character than to any reluctance to take his share in the cheerful intercourse of social life. He was ever ready to acknowledge with a smile the happy sallies of wit, and no man had a keener sense of the ludicrous, or laughed more heartily at genuine humour. His deportment and expression were easy and unembarrassed, dignified, elegant, and graceful. His politeness was equally free from all affectation, and from all premeditation. It was the spontaneous result of the purity of his own taste, and of a heart warm with all the benevolent affections, and was characterised by a truth and readiness of tact that accommodated his conduct, with undeviating propriety, to the circumstances of the present moment, and to the relative situation of those to whom he addressed himself. From an early period of life, he had frequented the best society both in France and in this country, and he had, in a peculiar degree, the air of good company. In the society of ladies he appeared to great advantage, and to women of cultivated understanding, his conversation was particularly acceptable and pleasing. The immense range of his erudition, the attention he had bestowed on almost every branch of philosophy, his extensive acquaintance with every department of elegant literature, ancient or modern, and the fund of anecdote and information which he had collected in the course of his intercourse with the world, with respect to almost all the eminent men of the day, either in this country or in France, enabled him to find suitable subjects for the entertainment of the great variety of his visitors of all de-

[1] *Memoir*, p. 12. Mr. Stewart occupied Stewartfield House, in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, for several years. He afterwards lived in Lothian, and then in Callendar House, formerly town residences of the Lothian and Callendar families. Both houses are situated in the lower part of the Canongate.

scriptions, who at one period frequented his house. In his domestic circle, his character appeared in its most amiable light; and by his family he was beloved and venerated almost to adoration. So uniform and sustained was the tone of his manners, and so completely was it the result of the habitual influence of the natural elegance and elevation of his mind on his external demeanour, that when alone with his wife and his children, it hardly differed by a shade from that which he maintained in the company of strangers; for although his fondness, and familiarity and playfulness were alike engaging and unrestrained, he never lost anything either of his grace or his dignity: 'Nec vero ille in luce modo, atque in oculis civium magnus, sed intus domique præstantior.'"[1]

In March 1792, Mr. Stewart gave to the world the first volume of the *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind.* This volume was his earliest contribution towards that scheme of a comprehensive delineation of man as mind, which, as we have already seen, he had proposed to himself as the grand aim of his life. The volume is chiefly psychological; and, after preliminary remarks on the nature, ends, and utility of philosophy, deals with the Powers of Knowledge, embracing External Perception, Attention, Conception, the Laws of Association, Memory, and Imagination.

The first volume of the *Elements* was very favourably received in Scotland. In England it did not, on its publication, attract equal notice. It reached a second edition in 1802, and was translated into French by Mr. Stewart's friend, M. Prévost of Geneva, in 1808.[2] The volume was appropriately dedicated by Mr. Stewart to his revered instructor and friend, Dr. Reid.

[1] *Memoir*, pp. 14, 15.

[2] The translation into French of the three volumes of the *Elements* is now complete; M. Peisse, so well known to students of philosophy by his able translation of the articles from the *Edinburgh Review*, by Sir W. Hamilton, having added to the volume translated by M. Prévost, the two remaining volumes. The whole is entitled, *Elémens de la Philosophie de l'Esprit Humain, traduits en Français, par Louis Peisse, avec une Notice sur la Vie et les Ouvrages de l'Auteur.* 3 vols. in 12. Paris, 1845. The first volume of the *Elements*, the early part of which contains a general statement of Mr. Stewart's properly metaphysical doctrines, was very influential in promoting the spread of Scottish speculation in France.

Besides the connexion of master and pupil, and that arising from the general harmony of their philosophical opinions, Dr. Reid and Mr. Stewart were united by a bond of the strongest personal attachment.

Though Mr. Stewart fully exemplified his own fine delineation of what the life of the thinker should be, as "a continued series of experiments on his own faculties and powers,"[1] he was far from pursuing exclusively a solitary course of abstract meditation on the ultimate elements of human knowledge. The space he devotes to purely metaphysical speculation, involving the discussion of first principles—the nature, origin, and limits of human knowledge—does not bulk largely in his voluminous writings.[2] Nor can we claim for those portions of his works any marked originality.[3] Among Scottish philosophers, Stewart is eminently the psychological and ethical observer. Without neglecting the questions regarding first principles, or the inquiry into what is essential and permanent in the phænomena of mind, his chosen walk, as already indicated, is doubtless the delineation of human character, intellec-

[1] *Philosophical Essays*, *Works*, vol. v. p. 33.

[2] The purely metaphysical portion of his writings is mainly comprised in the following references:—

Works, vol. ii., *Elements*, vol. i. Introd. part i. Nature and Object of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, Chap. i. External Perception.

Works, vol. x., *Life of Reid*, sect. ii.

Works, vol. v., *Philosophical Essays*, Ess. i. Locke's Account of the Sources of Human Knowledge. Ess. ii. Idealism of Berkeley. Ess. iii. Locke's Authority in France. Ess. iv. Hartley, Priestley, and Darwin. Ess. v. Tooke's Philological Speculations.

Works, vol. iii., *Elements*, vol. ii. chap. i. Fundamental Laws of Belief.

To these should be added the relative portions of the *Outlines*, and the historical and critical notices of metaphysical opinions given in the *Dissertation*, *Works*, vol. i.

[3] Mr. Stewart offers sundry modifications of Reid's doctrine of External Perception, in his Essay on the Idealism of Berkeley (*Phil. Essays*, *Works*, vol. v. Essay ii.); and a threefold classification of the Qualities of Matter, the merit and importance of which are very considerable. He has likewise some highly valuable remarks on the precise character of the knowledge which involves the fact of Self-existence. His views of the various questions generally referred to the head of Causality are also to a considerable extent peculiar to himself. See *Works*, vol. ii., *Elements*, vol. i. ch. i. sect. 2, p. 97; *Works*, vol. iii., *Elements*, vol. ii. p. 230, *et seq.*

For general notice of the Method and Scope of Scottish speculation, as represented by the writings of Reid and Stewart, see chap. iv.

tual, moral, and æsthetical, as it appears under the modifications which it is apt to receive from the varied circumstances of education and society. He was thus naturally led to note, in particular, the influences at work in his own times, on the institutions and men around him. His writings, accordingly, reflect, in a very marked degree, the age and society in which he lived—its general manners, habits of thought, and modes of feeling. The matter of his reflection has generally some link of connexion with the actual life of his own, or of a more remote period; and while his speculation has its origin in the real or concrete, it is prosecuted with a view to its human bearing and interest. His writing, moreover, is that of a man in whom feeling has its place alongside of intellect. Endowed with generous, not less than broad and delicate vision, his delineations of human character show a clear insight into its entireness and normal condition, and a lively sympathy with man in his often fruitless struggles after what is true and good. To the worlds of men and nature, in their manifold varieties, Stewart is singularly alive. He ranges freely through both regions with ready eye and responsive heart; and though he observes only that he may reflect and combine, he performs the preliminary process spontaneously and with full appreciation. He is never at a loss for materials of reflection. He finds them at home and abroad,—within himself, in the society in which he moves, and in the general literature and history which he reads. He turns aside from no product of the human faculties, thinking every mental effort, even the humblest, worthy of the attention of the psychologist, as fitted to illustrate some aspect of the many-sided mind. "Although," says his son, "he had read more than most of those who are considered learned, his life, as he has himself somewhere remarked, was spent much more in reflecting than in reading; and so unceasing was the activity of his mind, and so strong his disposition to trace all subjects of speculation that were worthy to attract his interest up to their first principles, that all important objects and occurrences furnished fresh matter to his thoughts. The political events of the time sug-

gested many of his inquiries into the principles of political economy; his reflections on his occasional tours through the country, many of his speculations on the picturesque, the beautiful, and the sublime; and the study of the characters of his friends and acquaintances, and of remarkable individuals with whom he happened to be thrown into contact, many of his most profound observations on the sources of the varieties and anomalies of human nature."[1]

The following passage, besides being remarkable for grace and finish of composition, illustrates the wide range of Stewart's philosophical observation :—"To counterbalance the disadvantages which the Philosophy of Mind lies under, in consequence of its slender stock of experiments, made directly and intentionally on the minds of our fellow-creatures, Human Life exhibits to our observation a boundless variety, both of intellectual and moral phenomena; by a diligent study of which, we may ascertain almost every point that we could wish to investigate, if we had *experiments* at our command. The difference between Observation and Experiment, in *this* instance, considered as sources of knowledge, is merely *nominal;* amounting to nothing more than this, that the former presents spontaneously to a comprehensive and combining understanding, results exactly *similar* to those which the latter would attempt to ascertain by a more easy and rapid process, if it possessed the opportunity. Hardly, indeed, can any experiment be imagined, which has not already been tried by the hand of Nature; displaying, in the infinite varieties of human genius and pursuits, the astonishingly diversified effects, resulting from the possible combinations of those elementary faculties and principles, of which every man is conscious in himself. Savage society, and all the different modes of civilisation;—the different callings and professions of individuals, whether liberal or mechanical;—the prejudiced clown;—the factitious man of fashion;—the varying phases of character from infancy to old age;—the prodigies effected by human art in all the objects around us;—laws,—government,—commerce,—religion;—but,

[1] *Memoir*, p. 10.

above all, the records of thought preserved in those volumes which fill our libraries;—what are they but *experiments*, by which Nature illustrates, for our instruction, on her own grand scale, the varied range of Man's intellectual faculties, and the omnipotence of Education in fashioning his Mind?"[1]

At the period of the publication of the first volume of the *Elements*, purely philosophical speculation was at even a lower ebb than usual in England. The prevalent doctrine with the few who took any interest in the subject, was of the lowest Sensational school. The theorists in philosophy of that time, sought to explain the mental phænomena by the material modifications, vibrations and vibratiuncles, and an exaggerated application of the law of association. Mind was with them simply the reflex of the material organism. The extreme doctrines of the French Encyclopedists, of Condillac and Helvetius, were paralleled by the shallow hypotheses of Hartley and Darwin; and the intrepid prosecution of these to their last results in Morals and Theology, by Priestley and Belsham.[2] Nothing accordingly could be more opportune,

[1] *Philosophical Essays*, *Works*, vol. v., pp. 34, 35. These extracts are taken from the Introduction prefixed to the *Philosophical Essays*, in which Mr. Stewart refers to the critique of his *Account of the Life and Writings of Reid*, which appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* in January 1803. The writer, in the course of his article, seeks to depreciate metaphysical studies, chiefly on the ground that they afford no room for experiment as contradistinguished from observation, and therefore produce no new results, such as the experimental sciences afford. The assault derives its whole importance from its having elicited the powerful, luminous, and eloquent exposition of the nature, methods, and results of reflective research, which is contained in the prefatory part of the *Philosophical Essays*. The *Review* returned to the charge on the publication of the *Philosophical Essays* in 1810, (Vol. xviii. p. 173, Nov. 1810), in a critique which, like the former, shows considerable acuteness and dexterity, but quite fails to appreciate the nature, development, or uses of the reflective sciences. The estimate of the more purely speculative part of the writings, both of Reid and Stewart, which these native criticisms exhibit, is in singular contrast to the appreciation which they were destined very soon to experience among French thinkers.—See on the other side, the *Quarterly Review*, vol. vi. Art. i. (by Mr. Macvey Napier), *Sir James Mackintosh's Life*, vol. ii. pp. 151, 152.

[2] Sir James Mackintosh, writing to Mr. Stewart from London in 1802, testifies to the want of anything which he could call purely philosophical thinking in England; and adds, that Scotland has no one but Mr. Stewart himself to rely on for the maintenance of her character

than the appearance of the first volume of Mr. Stewart's writings at the period in question. In spirit and matter, the kind of thinking these writings successively exemplified, was fitted to impart an elevated tone to the current speculation of the age, alike in Psychology, Metaphysics, and Morals.

They recommended abstract truths, moreover, by graces of style seldom to be met with in philosophical composition. Without the homely familiarity, simple force, and directness of Reid, Stewart's style is more conspicuously that of the refined and fastidious scholar. Stewart never fails in perfect mastery of the thought which he seeks to express; nor is he ever wanting in grace, clearness, and adaptation of language, and that peculiar charm which pure moral feeling imparts to style—more attractive far than any merely literary beauty. Where he seeks to afford a complete view of his subject, he builds with the eye of a master for general effect, as watchful of the minutest detail, as of the comprehensive whole. With but little of the deductive style of mind, he commonly starts from the individual and concrete, and gradually works his way upwards to the abstract and general, skilfully unfolding his principle as he proceeds, and happily illumining the salient points of the discussion by the light of striking analogies; for Stewart, though inculcating, as the model of the philosophical style, the nearest possible approach to an algebraic generality of language, is by no means true to his own precept.[1] Nothing indeed is more remarkable in his composition than fulness yet chasteness of ornament, conjoined with ease and smoothness of flow, and literary finish. Few writers, as Mackintosh has remarked, rise more gracefully from a plain groundwork to the passages which require greater animation or embellishment. In this particular, indeed, his style affords a fine exemplification of the precept of Cicero,

in that department.—*Life*, vol. i. pp. 177-180.

We further learn from a letter of Francis Horner, written from London in 1804, that the only Scotchman whose conclusions in philosophy were at that period accepted, was David Hume; and that the highest names in the estimation of those in the metropolis who felt any interest in speculative pursuits, were Hobbes and Hartley.—*Memoirs of Horner*, vol. i. p. 282.

[1] *Works*, vol. ii., *Elements*, vol. i. pp. 181, 447.

exhibiting "umbram aliquam et recessum, quo magis id quod erit illuminatum, extare atque eminere videatur." Stewart's mode of dealing with philosophical questions being, however, more distinguished by amplitude of range and fulness of detail, than severity or depth of analysis, is naturally unfavourable to condensed and highly forcible composition. His writing flows freely and without break, not however with the concentrated force of the impetuous current, but rather with the measured and stately motion of the wide stream, whose ample volume bears along the contributions of many lands. It must also be admitted, that the prodigality of illustration, the number of historical and classical references, and the strong tendency to note the practical bearings of abstract views, frequently interfere with the progress of philosophical discussion; marring the unity of the whole, and, like too many side lights, distracting the attention from the principal object.

The discussion on the Use and Abuse of general principles in Politics,[1] affords a fine specimen of Mr. Stewart's style and general powers. From a small beginning, he gradually rises from point to point of comprehensiveness, until, warming and expanding with the developing magnitude of his theme, he completes a delineation of the past history and future prospects of the race, in which intellect and imagination go harmoniously hand in hand; the former lending force and breadth, the latter grace, illumination, and finish to the picture. Mr. Stewart's influence as a writer on the general mind of his time, was analogous to that which he exercised in his class-room, rather general and practical than purely speculative; and there can be no doubt that philosophical, especially moral and æsthetical principles, are most potent as springs of action, and most widely influential, when imagination and emotion concur in lending grace and ardour to their enforcement.

Sir James Mackintosh has given the following detailed, and, on the whole, discriminating estimate of Mr. Stewart's general manner as a writer:—"Amidst excellencies of the highest order, his writings, it must be confessed, leave some room for

[1] *Works*, vol. ii., *Elements*, vol. i. chap. iv. sect. viii.

criticism. He took precautions against offence to the feelings of his contemporaries, more anxious and frequent than the impatient searcher for truth may deem necessary. For the sake of promoting the favourable reception of philosophy itself, he studies perhaps too visibly to avoid whatever might raise up prejudices against it. His gratitude and native modesty dictated a superabundant care in softening and excusing his dissent from those who had been his own instructors, or who were the objects of general reverence. Exposed by his station, both to the assaults of political prejudice, and to the religious animosities of a country where a few sceptics attacked the slumbering zeal of a Calvinistic people, it would have been wonderful if he had not betrayed more wariness than would have been necessary or becoming in a very different position. The fulness of his literature seduced him too much into multiplied illustrations. Too many of the expedients happily used to allure the young may unnecessarily swell his volumes. Perhaps a successive publication in separate parts made him more voluminous than he would have been if the whole had been at once before his eyes. A peculiar susceptibility and delicacy of taste produced forms of expression, in themselves extremely beautiful, but of which the habitual use is not easily reconcilable with the condensation desirable in works necessarily so extensive. If, however, it must be owned that the caution incident to his temper, his feelings, his philosophy, and his station, has somewhat lengthened his composition, it is not less true, that some of the same circumstances have contributed towards those peculiar beauties which place him at the head of the most adorned writers on philosophy in our language.

"Few writers rise with more grace from a plain groundwork to the passages which require greater animation or embellishment. He gives to narrative, according to the precept of Bacon, the colour of the time, by a selection of happy expressions from original writers. Among the secret arts by which he diffuses elegance over his diction, may be remarked the skill which, by deepening or brightening a shade in a secondary term, by opening partial or preparatory glimpses of a thought

to be afterwards unfolded, unobservedly heightens the import of a word, and gives it a new meaning, without any offence against old use. It is in this manner that philosophical originality may be reconciled to purity and stability of speech, —that we may avoid new terms, which are the easy resource of the unskilful or the indolent, and often a characteristic mark of writers who love their language too little to feel its peculiar excellencies, or to study the art of calling forth its powers.

"He reminds us not unfrequently of the character given by Cicero to one of his contemporaries, 'who expressed refined and abstruse thought in soft and transparent diction.' His writings are a proof that the mild sentiments have their eloquence as well as the vehement passions. It would be difficult to name works in which so much refined philosophy is joined with so fine a fancy,—so much elegant literature, with such a delicate perception of the distinguishing excellencies of great writers, and with an estimate in general so just of the services rendered to knowledge by a succession of philosophers. They are pervaded by a philosophical benevolence, which keeps up the ardour of his genius, without disturbing the serenity of his mind,—which is felt in his reverence for knowledge, in the generosity of his praise, and in the tenderness of his censure. It is still more sensible in the general tone with which he relates the successful progress of the human understanding among many formidable enemies. Those readers are not to be envied who limit their admiration to particular parts, or to excellencies merely literary, without being warmed by the glow of that honest triumph in the advancement of knowledge, and of that assured faith in the final prevalence of truth and justice, which breathe through every page of them, and give the unity and dignity of a moral purpose to the whole of these classical works.

"He has often quoted poetical passages, of which some throw much light on our mental operations. If he sometimes prized the moral commonplaces of Thomson, and the speculative fancy of Akenside more highly than the higher poetry of their betters, it was not to be wondered at that the metaphysician and the moralist should sometimes prevail over the lover of

poetry. His natural sensibility was perhaps occasionally cramped by the cold criticism of an unpoetical age; and some of his remarks may be thought to indicate a more constant and exclusive regard to diction, than is agreeable to the men of a generation who have been trained by tremendous events to a passion for daring inventions, and to an irregular enthusiasm, impatient of minute elegances and refinement. Many of those beauties which his generous criticism delighted to magnify in the works of his contemporaries, have already faded under the scorching rays of a fiercer sun."[1]

In 1793 Mr. Stewart read before the Royal Society his *Account of the Life and Writings of Adam Smith.* It was published in the third volume of the *Transactions of the Society.* The fourth section of the Memoir contains a general account of the *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations.* Stewart's general approval of the doctrines of Smith, and his undisguised leaning to liberal political opinions, taken in connexion with his acknowledged influence over the minds of his pupils, made him, as we have already seen, the object of suspicion and distrust in a time so jealous and despotic. The following correspondence affords some insight into the state of political feeling in Scotland towards the close of last century. The chapter to which reference is made is that on the Use and Abuse of General Principles in Politics.[2] On the back of one of the letters there occur, in Mrs. Stewart's handwriting, the following words: —"Scotland in the 1794. From two persons who were at least three evenings in the week in our house."

Lord Craig[3] to Mr. Stewart.

Edinburgh, 15*th February* 1794.

Sir,—In consequence of our late conversation, I have

[1] *Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy*, pp. 388-390.

[2] *Works*, vol. ii., *Elements*, vol. i. chap. iv. sect. viii. p. 219, note (1802); Cf. *Works*, vol. x., *Life of Smith*, sect. iv. p. 53, note, and Note G, p. 87.

[3] Lord Craig was the official designation of William Craig, one of the Lords of Session. He was an occasional contributor to the *Mirror* and *Lounger*. He died in 1813.—(Brunton and Haig's *Senators of the College of Justice*, p. 540.)

mentioned the subject to my friend, who occasioned that conversation, in the manner you wished, as nearly as I could. I am persuaded, as indeed I was when I saw you, that there has been no improper interference of any kind by any third person. My own opinion I have already given. Without being able to give precisely the words of the gentleman whom it was your wish I should speak to, I find his impressions are of the following nature. That when he first read a certain chapter in a certain book, he considered it as an attempt to introduce the opinions of some late philosophers into Great Britain, and what was still more, to point a practical application of them to the Political Institutions and Government of this country. That even allowing the principles in that chapter, however erroneous, to have been written with the most innocent intention at the time, that after the massacres in France, and the dreadful actings such principles had produced, and after the consequences of them had been expressed in such horrible and bloody characters, it could not only not be innocent to maintain those opinions, but that that conduct could not be innocent which did not disavow them; and endeavour to correct their pernicious operation in the most explicit manner. He added, and I believe I now give pretty correctly his words, "that the *triumphs of philosophy and reason*, daily exhibited in France, ought to have satisfied every thinking and every virtuous man of the danger of unhinging established institutions, even though such institutions should appear, when considered abstractedly in the closet, to be less perfect than the theories of speculative and ingenious men. Having read the chapter alluded to, *after* the massacre of Paris, he flattered himself, from the high opinion he entertained of your character, that you would embrace the earliest opportunity of retracting in an open and manly manner, every sentiment you had ever entertained, and every word you had ever uttered, in favour of doctrines which had led to so giant a mischief; and above all, he trusted that you would have exerted all your talents, to impress upon the minds of our youth, a love and a veneration for the British constitution, upon the preservation of which it is now too evident, that not the public welfare

alone, but the safety and happiness of every individual in his little domestic circle necessarily depends. Disappointed in those hopes, and knowing with absolute certainty that there exists at this moment a party among us, who wait only for a favourable opportunity to repeat here the same scenes of horror which have been acted in France, he owns that he cannot esteem any man, be his talents what they may, who in any shape whatever gives the smallest countenance to opinions which, in *these times*, and under the *circumstances* in which we are now unhappily placed, tend directly to destroy the peace and happiness of society, and to deprive us of everything that is valuable and dear to us in life."

I have thus given the result of this conversation on a subject, which, I said to you, and I now most feelingly repeat it, has given me much vexation.

I have received the *Account of the Life and Writings of Mr. Smith*, for which I thank you.—I am, Sir, your most humble servant, WILL. CRAIG.

MR. STEWART TO LORD CRAIG.

STEWARTFIELD, 20*th February* 1794.

MY LORD,—I had the honour of your letter, and return you my thanks for the trouble you have taken in consequence of our last conversation. Lord Abercromby[1] has now satisfied me in a manner sufficiently explicit, that I was not mistaken in what I had suspected, of a change in his sentiments with respect to me. Recollecting, as I did, the obligation he had laid me under by the friendly dispositions he had formerly discovered towards Mr. Cranstoun,[2] I felt an uneasiness from this apprehension which I cannot express; and I dreaded that some misrepresentations had led him to believe that I did not retain a suitable sense of his kindness. The circumstances stated in your letter gratify me, at least in one respect, by

[1] Abercromby was, like his friend Craig, a Lord of Session. He was a son of Abercromby of Tulliebody. He was one of the projectors of the *Mirror*, *World*, and *Lounger*, and a contributor to those periodicals.—Haig's *College of Justice*, p. 540.

[2] Mr. Stewart's brother-in-law.

the evidence they afford me, that it is not in consequence of anything in my conduct which personally regarded Lord Abercromby, that I have had the misfortune to lose his esteem.

With respect to my writings, they are now before the world, and I must abide by the consequences. That I differed widely from some of my friends, in rejoicing at the prospect of an extension of our own political happiness to other nations, I am not ashamed to acknowledge; but the chapter your Lordship alludes to bears ample testimony in my favour, that even in the most despotic governments of Europe, I was aware of the mischiefs to be apprehended from the spirit of innovation, and from sudden changes in established institutions. If I have dwelt long on the expediency of a slow and gradual accommodation of laws to the varying circumstances of a people, it was not from a wish to encourage political discussions among the multitude, but from an anxious desire to prevent the danger of such an evil. In one very strong fact I have much ground of satisfaction, that while my book has received the approbation of many of the most respectable men in both parts of the island, no reference has been made to my opinions (so far as I have been able to learn), by any of the inflammatory writers of the times. As soon as I understood that the scope of some of my observations had been mistaken by a few whose characters I respect, I was anxious to guard against the possibility of such misapprehension, by the remarks I have introduced in pages 57 and 58 of my account of Mr. Smith.[1] Mr. Mackenzie knows that it was entirely owing to Mr. Cadell that this account was not published more than a twelvemonth ago.

I have expressed myself strongly on the merits of the first Economists, most of whom are long since dead, and whose speculations certainly had no more connexion with forms of government, than those in Mr. Smith's *Wealth of Nations;* but as to the French philosophers in general, and the tendency of their sceptical doctrines to corrupt the morals, and to poison the happiness of mankind, your Lordship will do me the justice to acknowledge that I opposed them with zeal, at a time when

[1] Sect. iv.

the profession of scepticism was not quite so unfashionable as it is at present. Whoever may be called upon to retract their former admiration of these principles (which have indeed *led to a giant mischief*) I certainly am not among the number. I shall ever regret that I dishonoured some of my pages by mentioning with respect the name of Condorcet; but when my papers were sent to the press, he was quite unknown in any public capacity, and he enjoyed the friendship of the most respectable men in Europe. The passage[1] I have quoted from him (considered in its reference to the old French Government) breathes a spirit of moderation, which, if it had proceeded from any other pen, would be read not only without censure, but with high approbation. It is for this passage alone I am responsible, and not for anything else in his writings—far less in his subsequent conduct. I shall only add, that ever since I was Professor of Moral Philosophy, I have concluded my course with a set of Lectures on the English Constitution, the peculiar excellencies of which I have always enlarged upon in the warmest and most enthusiastic terms. In treating of this subject, I have been so uniformly impressed with a sense of the importance of my situation, that among all the interesting questions which have, during the last nine years, divided our political parties, I have never introduced the slightest reference to any of them excepting in the single instance of the African trade, on which I formerly expressed myself with some warmth;—and even these expressions I dropped from my course, as soon as it became matter of popular discussion. Of the utility of my labours as an instructor of youth, it does not become me to judge, but I may be allowed to say, that I have long enjoyed, and that I continue to enjoy, every testimony of approbation which the public can give.

I hope you will forgive me for troubling you with these details. I have no view in stating them to court the friendship of any man—but to do justice to myself. Your Lordship has had some knowledge of my habits in private life, and I believe are satisfied that my *little domestic circle* gives me as deep

[1] *Works*, vol. ii. p. 237; Cf. Note M, p. 488.

an interest in the tranquillity of my country as any individual can possess, however elevated his station.—I am, my Lord, your most humble servant, DUGALD STEWART.

In 1796, Mr. Stewart read before the Royal Society his *Account of the Life and Writings* of his friend Principal Robertson ;[1] and in 1802, his *Account of the Life and Writings of Reid.*

Mr. Stewart, notwithstanding his marked aversion to public controversy, was led to take a prominent part in what is known as the Leslie Case, which commenced early in 1805. Besides Mr. Stewart, this case called into the field as controversial writers, among others, his friends Professor Playfair and Dr. Thomas Brown. Mr., afterwards Sir John, Leslie, then recently known to the world by his *Experimental Inquiry into the Nature and Propagation of Heat* (1804), appeared as a candidate for the Chair of Mathematics in the University, rendered vacant by the transference of Mr. Playfair to that of Natural Philosophy. Leslie's most formidable opponent was the Rev. Thomas Macknight, one of the city clergymen,—a respectable mathematician, but one whose scientific attainments could not for a moment stand before those of his competitor. Macknight was the nominee of a section of his co-presbyters, who were believed to have long cherished the scheme of conjoining the Professorships of the University, theological and literary, with the City Church livings; and thus, in sober earnest, making the Metropolitan University a mere appendage to the parochial and ministerial duties of a single Presbytery of the Church.

The ground on which the Presbytery chiefly relied in their opposition to Leslie was a note appended to his *Inquiry*, in which it was alleged that he had unexclusively adopted Hume's doctrine of Causation, and therefore become responsible, in the

[1] Referring to *Robertson's Life*, he writes to Mr. Alison, 1797 :—"I wish much for an opportunity of reading it to you before it goes to press. I hate biography, and scarcely know whose life I would not rather have written than Dr. Robertson's. . . . There are, however, I hope, a few good passages in it, which may perhaps save the rest, and although it is not so much to my taste as my account of Adam Smith, I should not be surprised if it were better received by the public."

widest sense, for the results of Hume's speculations. The note is as follows:—

"Mr. Hume is the first, as far as I know, who has treated causation in a truly philosophical manner. His *Essay on Necessary Connexion* seems a model of clear and accurate reasoning. But it was only wanted to dispel the cloud of mystery which had so long darkened that important subject. The unsophisticated sentiments of mankind are in perfect unison with the deductions of logic, and imply nothing more at bottom, in the relation of cause and effect, than *a constant and invariable sequence.* This will distinctly appear from a critical examination of language, that great and durable monument of human thought."[1] Leslie's defence of this note in his letter to Dr. Hunter, Professor of Divinity, is, that "the note in question considers the relation between cause and effect entirely as an object of *physical* examination, being only a more full illustration of the reasonings in the text."

The Presbytery claimed the right of guiding and regulating the decision of the Town-Council (the patrons), in regard to the fitness of candidates for University chairs; and, founding on this privilege of *avisamentum,* as it was called, they forwarded to the Council a statement detailing the grounds of their opposition to the appointment of Leslie, and protesting against his election. Notwithstanding the strenuous hostility of the Presbytery, the Town-Council, to their honour, boldly elected Leslie to the vacant chair. His clerical opponents were not, however, to be thus baffled. The matter was brought by the Presbytery of Edinburgh before the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, the next higher Church Court; and by the Synod it was *referred* to the General Assembly, or Supreme Court of the Church.

In the interval between the meeting of the Synod and that of the General Assembly, attempts were industriously made, in the newspapers and otherwise, to prejudice the public mind against Leslie, by putting the worst construction on the note regarding causation. It was with a view to vindicate the

[1] *Experimental Inquiry,* &c., Note xvi.

character of his friend from these aspersions, as well as in consideration of the leading philosophical principle, and lofty public interest, involved in the controversy, that Mr. Stewart published his first pamphlet on the subject.[1] The *Statement of Facts*, as it was entitled, though very hastily written, is remarkable for its ability and clearness. It was published a few days before the meeting of Assembly. After giving a narrative of the course of procedure in the case, Mr. Stewart adopts and defends the doctrine of causation, approved by Leslie, as applied to *physical sequences;* and seeks to show by a historical array of opinions, that the doctrine in this restriction was by no means new to Hume, and that it is not only theologically innocuous, but the only safe opinion.

The question, then, as stated by Leslie and his friends, though the language of the note is certainly too unqualified, regarded not the general subject of the nature of the causal judgment, but the narrower point as to what is the object of physical or scientific investigation. This, Leslie and Stewart contend, is simply invariable sequence, or those phænomena which stand to each other in an unvarying relation of antecedence and consequence. Hume had identified this relation with that of causality, thereby throwing out of the notion of cause all that is proper and distinctive. All that Leslie desired to be held as contending for, was simply that in physical investigation what we ought to seek,—what we can truly find,—is not the causality or efficiency of the antecedent, but the uniformly recurring phænomenal antecedent itself—that which is observed invariably to accompany the consequent or effect. This restriction of the province of physical science is by no means hostile to an adequate doctrine

[1] *A Short Statement of some important facts relative to the late Election of a Mathematical Professor in the University of Edinburgh, accompanied with Original Papers and Critical Remarks.* By Professor Dugald Stewart. Edinburgh, 1805. Pp. 102, with Appendix. The *Statement* contains a very masterly letter to the Lord Provost, by Mr. Stewart's friend, Professor Playfair.

In December of the same year, appeared *Postscript to Statement of Facts*, with Appendix of Documents, containing a brief notice of strictures made on the first pamphlet.

of Causality, and leaves the question as to the true nature of the causal judgment quite untouched. Mr. Stewart's doctrine on this point, long previously published, goes considerably beyond what is necessary for the defence of Leslie's position. For, besides restricting physical science to an inquiry into essential phænomenal antecedents, Mr. Stewart denies that a material antecedent is possessed of power or efficiency, holding that this is an attribute of mind or intelligence alone. We must, therefore, in every case of physical sequence, go beyond the terms observed, if we would reach the power or causality actually operating the effect. It is easily seen how closely such a doctrine borders on the old theory of Occasional Causes, so far as the whole class of physical sequences is concerned.[1]

Mr. Leslie was supported by the party in the Church known as the *Evangelical*, with certain of whose doctrinal opinions in theology the theory of causation he espoused might be readily made to harmonise. Sir Henry Moncreiff, who occupied a prominent place in the councils of the party, brought the case before the Assembly in the form of a Complaint against the Reference from the Synod. After an animated debate of two days, further proceedings against Mr. Leslie were stayed, by the decision of the Assembly to sustain the Complaint. The vote stood 96 to 84.[2]

The Leslie Case, as indeed any question of interest brought before the British public between the years 1789 and 1814, gave rise to violent political feeling, and much personal irritation. Some passages in the Leslie Pamphlets, and circumstances connected with the case, show that Mr. Stewart was capable of indignation which was submitted to little control, when injustice appeared to him to be offered to a friend; especially when, at the same time, he was impressed with the conviction that lofty general interests were imperilled by the

[1] For Stewart's doctrine of Causality, see *Works*, vols. ii. iii., *Elements*, vol. i. pp. 97, 476-479; vol. ii. pp. 230, 248, 389-391.

[2] *Tracts, Historical and Philosophical, relative to the Election of Mr. Leslie to the Professorship of Mathematics.* In two vols. 8vo. Edinburgh, 1806. *Edinburgh Review*, vol. vii. No. 13, Art. vii. Cockburn's *Memorials*, p. 198.

competition of narrow and sordid aims. He was a member of Assembly on the occasion, being returned as representative elder for the University of Edinburgh. He made a short speech towards the close of the discussion, which, according to Cockburn, "he meant to have been longer, but inexperience of such rough scenes made him too plain in his indignation, and he was called to order and sat down; not, however, until he had delivered a few long-remembered sentences in a very fine spirit of scorn and eloquence."[1] Though Mr. Stewart took a very lively interest in all important public questions, the present passing lapse into strong expression of feeling, was in contrast both with his habitual courtesy and self-command, and with that general course of considerate language and conduct, which enabled him to acquire and retain the friendship of many leading men, on both sides of the party questions, throughout a period certainly of unusual political violence.

The Whig party, on their accession to power in 1806, some of the rising members of which had been pupils of Mr. Stewart, resolved to indicate their sense of the services he had rendered to philosophy and education, by appointing him to an office, the duties of which were merely nominal, entitled the Writership of the *Edinburgh Gazette*. The salary attached to the appointment was £300 a year. This office he held during life, and it was continued to his family for some years after his death. It was felt at the time by some of Mr. Stewart's friends that it was unnecessary to associate with a public office, which was almost a sinecure, the name of a man whose personal merits and public services were so eminent as to warrant their direct acknowledgment.

Mr. Stewart spent the greater portion of the summer of this year in Paris, with Lord Lauderdale. It was at his Lordship's request that Mr. Stewart accompanied him as a friend, when he undertook negotiations for peace on this important occasion. But whether, or to what extent, he may have consulted Mr.

[1] *Memorials*, p. 200. See *Report of Proceedings in General Assembly in the case of Professor Leslie*, p. 179. Edinburgh, 1805. The Leslie Case is referred to by Mr. Stewart, Appendix A, Letter XII., *infra*, p. cxxxviii.

Stewart in regard to his communications with the French Government, is not known, and probably there now exists no means of ascertaining. The mission with which his Lordship was charged, having failed, Mr. Stewart left Paris in the beginning of October. He had at this time the opportunity of renewing his acquaintance with many of the eminent men whom he had met in the French capital, before and at the commencement of the Revolution.

Mr. Stewart's health, which had been rather precarious for some years, received a severe blow from the death of his second son, George, in 1809. He was unable to lecture during a great part of session 1809-10. Dr. Thomas Brown, at his request, acted as his substitute. Mr. Stewart finally withdrew from active professorial duty at the end of this session. "Stewart's retirement," says Lord Cockburn, "made a deep and melancholy impression. We could scarcely bring ourselves to believe that that voice was to be heard no more. The going down of such a luminary cast a foreboding gloom over the friends of mental philosophy, and deprived the college it had so adorned, of its purest light."[1]

Dr. Brown was appointed conjoint Professor of Moral Philosophy, Mr. Stewart's name still remaining in the commission. Mr. Stewart used all his influence to secure Brown's appointment, even submitting personally to canvass the members of Council in his behalf.

Brown occupied the chair of Moral Philosophy from 1810 to 1820. His career as a lecturer was brilliant. But, as the event has proved, his talents were of a kind more fitted to produce among contemporaries a dazzling lustre, than to leave lasting results, or secure permanent renown. The hyperbolical laudation lavished by indiscriminating panegyrists on Brown's speculative qualifications, has contributed to obscure his real merits. With all his subtlety, ingenuity, fancy, and taste—and these qualities he undoubtedly possessed in a high degree—he lacked breadth and robustness of mind, as well as the higher kind of analytical insight. He has probably less of the

[1] *Memorials*, p. 250.

distinguishing peculiarities of the national intellect than any other of our Scottish thinkers. His prevailing tendency, as Stewart has remarked, is in the direction of over-refinement and false simplification—springing in great measure from a restless desire of new, startling, and splendid results. This habit of mind interfered with calmness, impartiality, and circumspection in the preliminary but essential part of the work of a theorist in mental science, viz., observation of phænomena. There are indeed few thinkers whose view of phænomena, when this is adduced as the basis of a theory, is to be received with more caution than that of Brown. His speculative theories are very much the product of an ingenious intellect that sets itself to assort facts in accordance with a ruling hypothesis.[1]

The course of Brown's thinking on several important fundamental points, both in Psychology and Metaphysics, is in direct antagonism to the results of Reid and Stewart. His identification of consciousness with feeling, and of physical with efficient cause,—his virtual abolition of the distinction between perception and sensation, and between the primary and secondary qualities of matter, and consequently of the doctrine of an intuitive perception—his confusion of will and desire, and his theory of simple and relative suggestion as a sufficient statement of the intellectual or cognitive element in human consciousness—indicate a retrograde tendency in Philosophy. Brown, by an intellect which was prodigal of refinements and pointed subtleties, and by a fancy in the fine lights of which even his least satisfactory analyses win a temporary acceptance ;—but especially by a skilful tracking and delineation of the hidden workings of human feeling—in which the reflex of his own individuality is conspicuous—turned aside, in some degree, the course of speculation in Scotland, from the channel in which it had begun to flow. But he failed in permanently giving it an opposite direction ; and his writings are now more generally regarded as

[1] This character of Brown's philosophical writings may probably be traced, in part, to the circumstances in which many of them were undertaken, implying hasty composition and punctual delivery ; and, in part, to a physical constitution always feeble and excitable.

simply a brilliant episode in the course of the philosophical thinking of the century, which has followed an earlier and more powerful impulse.[1]

From the year 1809 until the close of his life, Mr. Stewart lived, in comparative retirement, at Kinneil House, Linlithgowshire, which was generously placed at his service by his friend the late Duke of Hamilton. Kinneil is about twenty miles west from Edinburgh. Embowered amid stately trees, commanding to the north and west a view of long ranges of the Highland hills, and situated on the shores of the Firth of Forth, whose ample waters flowing from west to east, carry the eye forwards into seemingly boundless distance, the baronial mansion of Kinneil was a very favourite residence of Mr. Stewart. His retirement was almost exclusively devoted to maturing and arranging the philosophical labours of his previous life,—his reflective activity being interrupted only by friendly intercourse, and the calls of those strangers whom the lustre of his name led to pay a passing visit at Kinneil. Henceforward Mr. Stewart's life is even more than usually devoid of any incident of outward interest, and is to be read in the writings which he gave in succession to the world. From Kinneil were dated, in 1810, the *Philosophical Essays*;[2] in 1813 (but only

[1] Dr. Brown's biographer, in a note to the abridgment of his *Life* prefixed to the *Lectures* (p. xxx), seeks to fasten on Mr. Stewart (whom however he does not name), some unspeakable degree of moral obliquity in connexion with his estimate of Brown—in fact, a malicious attempt to depreciate Brown's fame. The whole charge rests on a note appended to the third volume of the *Elements*, and relative passage in the text, which appeared after the *Life of Brown*. The note certainly does not rate highly Brown's philosophical talent, nor the speculative results which he reached; for Mr. Stewart, while recognising his general ability, holds him to have been deficient in certain fundamental qualifications of the speculative thinker, and is, of course, far from approving Brown's doctrines, seeing these are, in general, precisely the reverse of his own. Those points, however, are surely legitimate grounds for difference of opinion. Mr. Stewart's previous testimonies to Brown's character and talents contain nothing inconsistent with the statements he finally made. Even if they did, they were made before the publication of Brown's *Lectures*, consequently before materials for a final estimate were presented. In all this there is obviously no ground for a moral charge; unless, indeed, it be a crime to express an estimate of Brown as a philosopher, which happens to fall short of that formed by his biographer.

[2] The *Philosophical Essays* were

published in 1814), the second volume of the *Elements;* in 1815, the First, and in 1821, the Second part of the *Dissertation;*[1] in 1826 (but only published in 1827), the third volume of the *Elements;* and in 1828, a few weeks before his death, the *Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers.*[2] The last mentioned work, with the relative part of the *Outlines*, embody the results of his properly ethical speculations.[3]

Dr. Brown died at an early age, in April 1820. His death left Mr. Stewart sole Professor of Moral Philosophy, and thus rendered the appointment of a colleague or successor necessary. Mr. Stewart was naturally exceedingly solicitous that the chair should be suitably filled. He did not immediately resign the professorship, and there was even a desire on the part of some that he would again attempt a course of lectures. His advanced age and the state of his health rendered

translated, in part, into French by Huret, in 1828, with the title, *Essais Philosophiques sur les Systèmes de Locke, Berkeley, Priestley, Horne Tooke, traduits par Huret.* 1828, 1 vol. 8vo.

[1] Translated into French—*Histoire Abrégée des Sciences Métaphysiques, depuis la Renaissance des Lettres en Europe. Traduction par J. Buchon.* 1823, 3 vols. 8vo. Mr. Stewart refers to his labours in connexion with the second part of the *Dissertation* in the following letter to M. Prévost, 1816:—

"Since I had last the pleasure of writing to you, I have been as constantly occupied as my health and spirits would permit, with the sequel of my *Dissertation*, a task for the execution of which I consider myself as, in some measure, pledged to the public, and which, *in case of accidents*, I am anxious to bring to a close with all possible expedition. If I had foreseen all the labour it was to cost me, and the complete interruption it was to give to my other pursuits, I should scarcely have undertaken it. Instead of following out my own speculations, I have been forced to turn over a multitude of books, which I had very little curiosity to open again, and which, in my present retreat (about twenty miles from Edinburgh), I can seldom command at the moment when I wish to consult them. I have however made considerable progress, and am in hopes that as I approach nearer to our own times, my subject will gain some additional interest with the great mass of readers."

[2] Translated into French—*Philosophie des Facultés Actives et Morales de l'Homme, traduite par MM. Simon et Huret.* Paris, 1834.

[3] Among Mr. Stewart's writings, the paper read by him before the Royal Society of Edinburgh (published in the *Transactions*, vol. vii. p. 1), giving an account of James Mitchell, born deaf and blind, is worthy of special notice, both from the great interest which he manifested in the case, as a subject of philosophical investigation, and the benevolent, though unsuccessful, efforts which he made, in order to place Mitchell under a regular course of education, suited to his circumstances. The case is fully detailed in the third volume of the *Elements*, p. 300, *et seq.*

this impossible. He eventually tendered his resignation on the 20th June 1820.

An expectation was entertained that Sir James Mackintosh, before whom the claims of all other candidates were waived, would accept the offer of the chair. But this proved groundless. Mr. Stewart gave his cordial support, in the first instance, to his friend Mr. Macvey Napier, already known to the world of letters, by his able essay on the *Scope and Influence of the Philosophical Writings of Bacon*, and then editor of the *Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica*. Mr. Napier, however, withdrew from the contest at an early period. There were now but two principal candidates in the field. The one was John Wilson, then in his youthful prime, and already known to the world by the first-fruits of a genius which proved itself highly versatile, and was prodigal of its riches,—but hardly fitted to wreathe with his other laurels those gathered on the heights of speculation. The other was Sir William Hamilton—bearing the repute of a career at Oxford among the most remarkable on record—whose marvellous speculative genius, though destined at a later period to become one of the greatest powers of the age, was as yet only very partially appreciated even by the reflective few,—his lofty ideal of excellence, and profound analytical insight, probably acting as checks on its early display,—but already versed in all subtleties, and laden with stores from regions of knowledge where no compeer had been.

Mr. Stewart, on the retirement of Mr. Napier, gave his warm support to the latter of those candidates. The appointment was, however, conferred on Mr. Wilson, by a large majority; the vote being 21 to 9.

Mr. Stewart was highly dissatisfied with the conduct of the Town-Council, throughout the whole course of the business connected with the election of the new professor. The following letter, addressed to Mr. James Gibson, W.S., afterwards Sir James Gibson-Craig, Bart.,[1] is interesting, both from its general reference to the matter of the election, and its bearing on one

[1] Communicated by his son, James T. Gibson-Craig, Esq.

whose name was afterwards to cast so great a lustre on the University, from an appropriate sphere in which he was meanwhile excluded:—

KINNEIL HOUSE, 12*th May* 1820.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am truly sorry to learn that there is now so very little probability that Mackintosh will accept of the vacant professorship. For this, however, I was in some measure prepared, as I was never very sanguine in my hopes (whatever his own wishes might be) that his political friends would consent to such a measure. I must own that I was not equally prepared for the sequel of your letter, having always flattered myself with the idea, that in the event of his retiring from the field, the choice of the Patrons of the University would, in the next instance, have fallen on Sir William Hamilton. It is but very lately that I have formed an acquaintance with that gentleman, so that I can scarcely speak of his merits from my own knowledge; but all I have seen of him confirms the very high character which I have heard, from the best authority, he bore in the University of Oxford, as a man of uncommon learning and talents. What weighs with me still more on this occasion, is the strong testimonies I have received from some of his private friends (above all from Lord Archibald Hamilton), in favour both of his abilities and of his worth. It is therefore with the sincerest regret that I can offer nothing but unavailing wishes for his success. As to my coming to Edinburgh at present, and waiting on any of the magistrates, it is a step which nothing can induce me to submit to. If my opinion and advice be wanted, the Patrons of the University know where I am to be found; and, everything considered, I cannot help thinking, that the application should rather come from them to me than from me to them. In the course of my conversation with Mr. Trotter about Macvey Napier, I told him decidedly, that whoever my successor might be, I was resolved that my name should not remain in the new Commission; a circumstance which may help to account for the qualified language which I understand from your letter is now held

by the chief magistrate. It was very contrary to my own feelings that my name was inserted in the Commission formerly given to my friend Dr. Brown; and if anything was wanting to convince me of the propriety of my judgment at that time, the painful anxiety I have felt since the present vacancy took place is more than sufficient to warn me against a repetition of the same error.

If the accounts that have reached me, of the very high influence which has been already employed in support of a particular candidate be not incorrect, I am fully persuaded of the necessity of yielding calmly to what we cannot prevent. Let the responsibility rest with those who have taken an active share in the business. As for myself, it cannot reasonably be expected that, at my time of life, I should engage in a fruitless struggle with our political rulers in both parts of the island. While I remained in the University, I spared no pains to support, to the best of my abilities, the reputation of the Chair which I filled for so many years; and since I left it, I cannot help thinking, that I have given abundant proofs of the deep interest which I take in its honour and prosperity.

Some of my friends still continue to urge me to give another Course of Lectures myself; and, although I am very doubtful whether I shall have courage for so laborious an undertaking, I do not mean, till my mind is more completely made up, to put it absolutely out of my power by a hasty resignation. If the office were likely to be given to a person of whose fitness to fill it I was perfectly assured, I would not stand one moment in his way. But in the present circumstances of the case, I feel it to be a duty to give public opinion full time to produce its effect; and of this interval I trust that the best use will be made by those who have the interests of the University sincerely at heart.[1]—I ever am, my dear Sir, yours most truly,

DUGALD STEWART.

[1] The opinion here expressed by Mr. Stewart, both in regard to the grounds of Mr. Wilson's appointment, and the merits of a defeated candidate, would certainly suffer no modification from the manner, whatever that might be, in which his successor discharged the duties of the Chair. At the same

In January 1822, Mr. Stewart was struck with paralysis. The attack considerably affected his power of utterance, and deprived him of the use of his right hand, and for a time quite unfitted him for study. "The malady," says his son, "which broke his health and constitution for the rest of his existence, happily impaired neither any of the faculties of his mind, nor the characteristic vigour and activity of his understanding, which enabled him to rise superior to the misfortune. As soon as his health was sufficiently re-established, he continued to pursue his studies with his wonted assiduity, to prepare his works for the press, with the assistance of his daughter as an amanuensis, and to avail himself with cheerful and unabated relish of all the sources of gratification which it was still within his power to enjoy—exhibiting, among some of the heaviest infirmities incident to age, an admirable example of the serene sunset of a well-spent life of classical elegance and refinement, so beautifully imagined by Cicero: 'Quiete, et pure, et eleganter actæ ætatis, placida ac lenis senectus.'"

Mrs. Stewart, in a letter to her husband's friend, M. Prévost of Geneva, in 1824, gives the following account of Mr. Stewart's health and occupation at that period:—

"Mr. Stewart employs me (for the state of his health prevents him from using his own pen), to return you his best thanks for your kind and welcome letter. It gives him always much pleasure to hear of your health and happiness, and still more, to hear it from yourself. He regrets sincerely that you and he should be so near, and yet cannot meet; but the idea of your domestic felicity, in the bosom of your family, and in your son's house, gives him real delight. I am thankful to say, Mr. Stewart's health is as good as, after the severe attack he

time, it should be observed, that Mr. Stewart was not at this period aware of the versatility of Mr. Wilson's talents, nor of the estimation in which his own writings were held by him. And, whatever variety of opinion may exist regarding the speculative qualifications of the immediate successor of Stewart and Brown, no pupil can forget the varied accomplishments of genius, by which, as a lecturer on Morals, he was distinguished; the power, pathos, and eloquence, by which he swayed at will an auditory of admiring students; and, above all, the lofty, generous, and kindly nature of the man.

had more than three years ago, we could possibly hope. He suffers no pain, his spirits are uniformly cheerful, and his mind as acute as ever. He walks between two and three hours every day; and, in fact, except a difficulty of speech, and a tremor in his hand when he attempts writing, no symptoms of paralytic affection remain. He is forbidden severe study by his medical friends; but he amuses himself with reading on his favourite pursuits, and with the classics."

Mr. Stewart died in Edinburgh, (in the house No. 5 Ainslie Place, where he and Mrs. Stewart were on a visit to their friend, Mrs. Lindsay,) on the 11th June 1828, after a brief illness and fresh shock of paralysis. He had but a few weeks before his death, given to the world his *Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers*—a work affording ample proof that neither age nor infirmity had damped the ardour of his spirit, or dimmed the clearness of his intellectual vision. He was buried in the family vault, on the west side of the churchyard of Canongate, not far from the grave of Adam Smith, leaving, like him, to coming generations of his countrymen, a name which they will not let die, so long as they continue to respect intellect and virtue, or to honour a life spent in the noblest uses, and unsullied by a single sordid aim.

Shortly after Mr. Stewart's death, a meeting of his friends and admirers was held in Edinburgh, at which the Lord Chief-Commissioner (Adam) presided. It was in pursuance of a resolution of this meeting, that the classical monument on the west side of the Calton Hill, by the late Mr. Playfair, was erected to his memory.

CHAPTER IV.

The Method and Scope of the Philosophy of Reid and Stewart—Its two grand contrasts, with a purely Formal Metaphysics, and with an Empirical Theory of Human Knowledge.[1]

THE Philosophy of Reid and Stewart owes its distinctive character mainly to the Method of inquiry which they adopt. By the validity and genuine application of their mode of investigation, the results reached by them fall to be tested. This Method is the Inductive, and may be generally said to be applied, in Scottish speculation, to the matter of human experience. The aim of Reid and Stewart, as purely *speculative*, leads them, of course, to throw out of the scope of their special investigation, phænomena, known as *material*, in their various kinds, or as these form the objects of *physical* science. This branch of science considers those phænomena, as they resemble, and differ from, each other. Of these agreements and differences, speculative philosophy takes no account. At the

[1] For an able, clear, and comprehensive review of the Philosophy of Reid and Stewart, see the Introduction prefixed by M. Jouffroy to his translation of the works of Reid: *Œuvres Complètes de Thomas Reid, chef de l'Ecole Ecossaise, publiées par M. Th. Jouffroy, avec des Fragments de M. Royer-Collard, et une Introduction de l'Editeur*, tom. i. Paris, 1836. With his Introduction to the Works of Reid, should be compared the Preface prefixed by M. Jouffroy to his translation of Mr Stewart's *Outlines;* Paris, 1826. M. Garnier has given an able summary of the doctrines of Reid, in his *Critique de la Philosophie de Thomas Reid.* Paris, 1840. The *Philosophie Ecossaise* of M. Victor Cousin (third Edition; Paris, 1857) is, I need hardly say, eminently worthy of attention. The edition of Reid's Works, by Sir W. Hamilton (1846), and the *Discussions on Philosophy*, by the same author, contain the latest development of Scottish speculation.

most, material phænomena are regarded by it merely as a certain kind of existence, contradistinguished from other forms of being. One main problem of speculation is, of course, to determine the character of material existence, and to vindicate the theory of matter on which it proceeds. But the sphere within which Reid and Stewart primarily and distinctively apply the method of induction, is that of the *subject* of Knowledge, Feeling, and Will, or of Consciousness in its various manifestations. They thus seek to build up the science of Mind, or Psychology proper, by a method analogous to that through which is obtained a knowledge of Matter in its varied phænomena; and to determine what we can know of existence in general, or to constitute the science of Metaphysics proper, by the analysis of the character and essential conditions of those powers of knowledge by which we are placed in relation with objects. Their doctrines,—whether relating simply to the phænomena of the subject of consciousness, as such, that is, *psychological*, or to the various kinds of existence that fall under human knowledge, that is, *metaphysical*,—are ultimately based on Observation and Analysis of Experience, in its different forms and essential elements. The central object in Scottish speculation is thus Human Consciousness; and the validity of its doctrines regarding Being is made to depend on the accuracy with which it represents the deliverances of consciousness, in its various relations to existence. Attempts have, however, been made since, as well as before, the time of Reid and Stewart, to establish Philosophy on grounds thought to be higher and more enduring than those for which they contend. On these efforts it is necessary to make some remarks.

The philosophy of Reid and Stewart is distinguished from an Absolute Science of Being, or Ontology, by the character of its method; for all purely ontological speculation is *deductive*, not inductive; professing to determine what existence is, or rather must be, through demonstration from some notion, in which its fundamental condition is alleged to be contained. Scottish speculation, on the contrary, trusting merely to observation and analysis of the object and conditions of our

actual knowledge, accepts certain deliverances of consciousness as ultimate, without seeking to comprehend *how* the existence which is thus revealed appears in knowledge ; and, recognising partial revelations of Being in limitations of knowledge, essays only faithfully to declare the character of those *facts* beyond which human knowledge cannot rise. The determination of what existence there is, in so far as this is regarded as possible by us, is accomplished not through notions as a deduction, but through a direct consciousness of the real itself. Determinate existence is a primary and immediate datum of knowledge, not a secondary and derivative result. All the existence which we can reach is either what thus appears directly in knowledge, or is involved in the reality immediately apprehended as its essential condition.

Speculative Ontology, strictly speaking, is of two grand kinds, as it founds on the *determinate*, or on the *indeterminate*, of knowledge or existence. In the former case, the problem is to show that the notion or principle placed in the foreground of the system contains the essential condition of universal knowledge and absolute existence. In the latter, the problem is to show, abstracting from all *experience* of what knowledge or existence is, how the particular or determinate, as known and existent, issues legitimately from the indeterminate, or absolutely general. Having established the condition of being in general, a purely abstract ontologist proceeds to evolve, by demonstration, as in mathematics, the various special forms of existence, as these are given in the various necessary forms of human knowledge. The grand difficulty on a scheme so pretentious is, of course, the starting-point. Here, emphatically, *ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute.*

A speculative Ontology of the less abstract kind, or one grounded on determinate data, discovered by observation, as principles of real existence, generally essays to vindicate as absolute either one or more of the necessary laws of the human intelligence. M. Cousin, for example, while concurring with the doctrines of the Scottish school, as to the origin of certain fundamental notions of the human intelligence, is at

variance with its teachings in regard to their character and sphere, and seeks to vindicate to man, in those notions, more than a relative knowledge of existence. The difference between the Scottish school and M. Cousin, is chiefly with regard to the import of certain necessary laws of knowledge and belief. While this school maintains the truth of the laws of Substance and Phænomenon, Cause and Effect, within the sphere of our knowledge, it refuses to identify them with the conditions of universal knowledge and of absolute existence. These laws, according to the doctrine of Reid and Stewart, convey to us a knowledge of reality as it exists in relation to our faculties; and, consequently, a knowledge essentially partial and inadequate. But we have no ground, according to them, for identifying even the essential modes of our knowledge with the necessary laws of all intelligence, or for elevating the forms of human knowledge to the rank of conditions, without which existence is impossible. M. Cousin affirms the non-reality and impossibility of being-in-itself, meaning purely indeterminate existence,—substance without qualities.[1] On this point, neither Reid nor Stewart can fairly be said to dogmatise. They content themselves with asserting that such existence does not come within the sphere of human knowledge; and is therefore for us as nothing. M. Cousin, however, appears to venture a step further; and, besides denying the possibility of indeterminate being as thus explained, he seems to restrict Being not only to the determinate, but to the determinate of human consciousness. The laws of Substance and Phænomenon, Cause and Effect, are regarded by him, not only as true and valid for us, but as *impersonal*, and consequently as the conditions of knowledge by every intelligence, human or divine. These are, in his view, the essential modes both of the divine knowledge and existence. The laws of our Reason are thus made convertible with the conditions of Absolute Reality, instead of being regarded simply as the modes or limitations under which existence is revealed to us. This is, doubtless, to

[1] For a passage bearing directly on the text, see *Philosophie Ecossaise*, IIme Leçon, p. 45 (3d Edit.)

arrogate to man a higher speculative knowledge than either Reid or Stewart would allow.

Deity is thus, on the doctrine of M. Cousin, positively known by us. We know Him as He is, in knowing the laws of our Reason, viz., substance and phænomenon, cause and effect. We can mark and define His being in its essence, although we cannot tell the full thunder of His power. Any manifestation of Him which is given in our experience, in the world and man, as finite, necessarily falls short of what is possible and adequate to infinite attributes. We, as finite, cannot, moreover, fully comprehend an infinity of manifestations. At no point of time is an infinite power of manifestation completed; and, therefore, it can never be fully and definitely arrested by human comprehension. But our ignorance of Deity is only of a part of His phænomenal manifestations. We know God positively, in His essence, or in Himself. We are necessarily ignorant only of the sum of His possible acts or manifestations.

The result of M. Cousin's doctrine, which thus identifies the laws of our Reason with the conditions of absolute existence, is simply the lowering of Absolute Being to the rank of the Relative, and the relative to Human Intelligence. Man is, in a sense, constituted the measure of the universe and of God; and all reality has its law assigned in the ultimate conditions of human consciousness. The doctrine of the Impersonality of Reason, tested by the consequences to which it legitimately leads, affords its own disproof. The necessary result of the assumption, being the identification of the Infinite with the Finite, and the Absolute with the Relative, is sufficient evidence that by the laws of our Reason, we cannot reach Absolute Being. Of God, Mind, and Matter, we have, in these laws, a knowledge essentially partial and inadequate, because only under limit and relation.[1]

The doctrine of M. Cousin, though resulting, when rigidly interpreted, in an inadequate Ontology, is not to be placed on the same level with a system which founds purely on the formal

[1] For a masterly criticism of the doctrine of M. Cousin, see Sir William Hamilton's *Discussions on Philosophy and Literature. Philosophy of the Unconditioned.*

laws of thought, and professes to evolve from these, by demonstration, all knowledge, and determine all reality. In point of fact, the doctrines of M. Cousin and the Scottish School, with regard to the character of the fundamental laws of human knowledge, show a much greater speculative than practical divergence; for if M. Cousin lays down those laws as strictly the conditions of absolute existence, the Scottish School, while holding that they afford only a partial revelation of Being, nevertheless regards them as true, proper, and sufficient modes of knowledge. Those laws are thus the forms of the only knowledge which *we* can ever expect to reach of Reality. They are therefore *for us*, in all our relations as intelligent and responsible beings, as the direct knowledge of the Absolute itself. May not M. Cousin's warm approval of the method and spirit of the Scottish School, especially in his later works, be taken as evidence of the close practical approximation of the two seemingly opposing theories?

An Ontology that founds either on knowledge or existence, regarded as purely indeterminate, has, of necessity, recourse to the formal laws of thought, in order to reach definite or determinate knowledge and being, especially to the law of Contradiction. By the aid of these laws alone, it seeks to evolve reality in general, and, consequently, the reality which is an object of human consciousness, as a necessary deduction, the opposite of which involves a contradiction. Its method is thus purely Formal. If it be possible to construct a Science of Being, or system of Metaphysics, by this method, the principle of investigation which characterises the philosophy of Reid and Stewart, is to be dismissed as useless and cumbersome. The two methods now referred to are diametrically opposed; and if the validity of the Formal method can be vindicated, the Metaphysical labours of those philosophers may be summarily discarded.

The purely Formal Method of Ontological speculation comes recommended by its alleged superiority to the data of experience, and its apparently perfect logical rigour. It has been essayed by more than one modern thinker, both before and

since the time of Reid. It is, however, not difficult to show that such an attempt must result in utter failure, and that a purely Demonstrative Method in Ontology, or the science of real existence, is, *ab initio*, null and incompetent.

In this country, indeed, the Method in question has been long abandoned, in prosecuting the science of Metaphysics or Philosophy proper. It has been for the most part silently, and quite correctly, assumed that the application of this Method in Metaphysics, with a view to determine not simply what we *cannot*, but all that we *can* and *must* know, proceeds on a mistake in regard to the character and province of the Logical Laws.[1] These are properly regulative of *given* matter of knowledge; and necessarily depend on *definition* for their application; whereas the use of them, in the present case, proceeds on the supposition that they are capable of *furnishing* matter of knowledge,—determining *what* we *do* and *must* know,—and that their exercise is independent of any given notion or proposition. The only result of this procedure, when carried out in metaphysics or the science of real existence, is not the widening of the bounds of human knowledge; but its complete evisceration, in the restriction of its sphere to the empty formulas of *identical propositions*.[2] For unless the fundamental principles of human knowledge, such as the laws of Cause and Effect, Substance and Phænomenon, are reducible to the level of merely analytic propositions, they cannot flow from the law of Contradiction, nor can it afford the guarantee of their truth; and these principles are allowed, on all hands, to be synthetic, not analytic, or purely identical propositions. In other words, the notion conveyed in the one term, as in Cause, Substance, is

[1] Mr. Stewart has given greater attention to the character of Philosophical Method than Dr. Reid. In a valuable chapter of the *Elements*, (*Works*, vol. iii., *Elements*, vol. ii. ch. ii., *Reasoning and Deduction*,) he has pointed out the essential difference between the Method of investigation, which is directly applicable to *facts of real existence*, and the Demonstrative Method, which finds its appropriate sphere in Mathematics. See especially of the Chapter now mentioned, sect. 3, p. 114, *et seq.* Compare *Works*, vol. x., *Account of Reid*, sect. 2.

[2] For special notice of the fallacy of the Formal Method in Metaphysics, and proof and illustration of the doctrine here stated, see Appendix C, III.—The Formal Method of Ontology.

different from, and an addition to, the contents of the notion Effect, Phænomenon. The indispensable condition on which the notion of Cause, for example, can be formally evolved from that of Effect is the absolute identity, in the first instance, of these terms. Let a change be given—an apparent beginning of existence—we are able to say, on the principle of Contradiction, that in the same moment in which the change occurs there cannot also be no change. But this principle does not of itself enable us to say that this change is *caused*, or related to some other existence by which its reality is determined. It only furnishes a warrant for the assertion that the change is not no change, *i.e.*, is itself; and unless what we call the *cause* be merely another expression for the beginning of existence, which is supposed or observed, we can never say, on the strength simply of the formal or logical law, that the change is caused. The same holds true of the law of Substance and Phænomenon.[1]

[1] Sir W. Hamilton has employed the principles of Contradiction and Excluded Middle in his genesis of the laws of Substance and Cause. This great thinker was, however, by no means likely to fall into the mistake here indicated, and rest those principles solely on the formal laws of thought. Neither of those laws, nor both combined, are supposed to *afford* the principles in question, or to enable us to pass from the sphere of mere possibility to that of fact and reality. Sir William starts, in both instances, from an alleged *fact*, for which he offers the guarantee of a *definite experience*. To take his genesis of the Causal Judgment: We are unable, he says, to realise the unconditioned in the form of the absolutely commencing. Think a change as absolutely beginning, we cannot. But we must, if unable to think this alternative, think the change as in relation to something beyond itself; for, by the law of Excluded Middle, there is no resting-place for thought between these notions, which are contradictories. Here, however, the latter proposition is obviously not an evolution merely from the law of Excluded Middle. Without this law we could not, on the theory in question, affirm this proposition as the only and necessary alternative. But its real guarantee or ground, —that through which the application of the principle of Excluded Middle is rendered possible,—lies altogether beyond the sphere of the principle, in the *fact* of our alleged impotency to compass the first-mentioned alternative of an absolute commencement. The formal law is here restricted to its proper function. It is purely regulative and dependent. The question even as to whether the necessary alternative—that the change is related to existence beyond itself—is, besides a need of *thought*, also a law of reality, falls to be determined by the circumstance as to how far the fact of our impotency to compass the counter-alternative is a guarantee of its non-reality; for, unless we are fully assured, apart from the law of Excluded Middle, that the one alternative is unreal, we cannot, on the strength of that

No thinker was more fully aware of the impossibility of evolving any law of positive knowledge out of the mere forms of thinking, or, as he says, of reasoning, than Hume. He frequently insists on this impossibility throughout that masterpiece of subtlety, the *Treatise of Human Nature.* He has moreover, shown with great force and clearness, the fallacy of the method in regard to one of those laws, viz., that of Cause and Effect. If the notions of Cause and Effect be more than identical terms, or if these be, to use Hume's expression, "distinct ideas," all attempts to evolve the principles from the laws of thought, involve a *petitio principii.* This Hume has conclusively established in regard to the demonstrations of the principle essayed by Hobbes, Clarke, and Locke.[1] Both Reid[2] and Stewart[3] acknowledge the conclusiveness of Hume's reduction; and by no lesson which the great sceptic taught, did these thinkers profit more largely.

It was thus with true wisdom, as well as profound philosophical insight, that Reid was led to shun a purely formal Method of Metaphysical inquiry, as necessarily barren of positive result; and to found our knowledge and belief of reality on what he called the Principles of Common Sense. It is by

principle, affirm the other as a law of *things.* It is of course still an open question as to whether the proposition, thus attained, is identical with the judgment of Causality.

The principle of Contradiction is likewise said to guarantee the reality of the phænomena of consciousness against the sceptical doubt. But the principle in this application has no metaphysical significance more than at any other time. This may be easily evinced. To doubt whether you are conscious, is to doubt whether you doubt. To doubt, therefore, of consciousness is impossible, because such an act of doubt is self-subversive. Doubt implying consciousness, you are conscious while you doubt. Such an act is equal to saying that you may not be conscious while you are conscious—that A may not be A. The act, as thus contradictory, is suicidal. But how is the act known to be contradictory? Only by knowing that doubt and consciousness are identical. This, however, is a *fact* of real existence, furnished by observation to the law of contradiction, and enabling it to come into operation,—a fact, moreover, without which the law is, in the present application, absolutely impotent.

[1] *Treatise of Human Nature*, vol. i. book i. sect. 2.

[2] *Reid's Works*, p. 445, Hamilton's edition; compare Hamilton's *Discussions*, p. 617.

[3] Stewart's *Works*, vol. i., *Dissertation*, p. 445; compare *Elements*, vol. ii. chap. ii. sect. 3.

these principles alone that we can escape the idle round of purely abstract and identical propositions. To suppose that we can rise, by help of the purely formal laws of thought, to a region above Experience, and that we thus lay all knowledge and reality at our feet, is simply to delude ourselves with the dream that we are sovereign masters of Absolute Being, while we are but the slaves of our own conceits. The doctrine of Common Sense offers, indeed, only such knowledge of existence as is possible under the limitation of our faculties, and wisely refrains from attempting to carry a measuring line round the sphere of Being. But its principles convey, within their proper limits, a valid and independent knowledge of what is. They by no means exhaust the sphere of reality, but they at least place us *directly* in that region. And while the logical laws fix those limits beyond which Existence becomes Non-Existence, but are unable of themselves to determine *what* it is, the principles of Common Sense reveal Being, and afford the *positive* conditions under which it is compassable by us.

But the Metaphysical Method of Reid and Stewart, while opposed to the procedure of a Formal Ontology, is no less distinguished from a purely Empirical theory of Human Knowledge. A brief illustration of this point will show more clearly the ground on which the principles of Common Sense are said to be synthetical, and not simply analytical judgments; and bring out more fully the general scope of Scottish speculation.

The philosophical method of Reid and Stewart, though Observational and Inductive, must not be supposed merely to afford results analogous to those reached by the same process in the investigation of what are known as material phænomena. A large proportion of the doctrines which the Scottish School teaches regarding the Powers of Knowledge, Feeling, and Will, are doubtless due simply to observation and generalisation. These are properly Psychological conclusions. They refer to the characters of the various mental powers as compared with each other—their agreements and differences; and the method of investigation by which we determine the various classes of those powers is perfectly analogous to the mode in which we

seek to groupe into various classes the appearances of matter Thus far Physical and Psychological induction agree. But, while physical and psychological laws are confessedly the mere products of generalisation, there are, according to Reid and Stewart, data of consciousness, in the form of laws or conditions of knowledge and belief, which are not simply generalised products, or principles obtained by observation and induction; but which are possessed of a native universality, far beyond what any process of generalisation can confer. Those truths, observation, as applied to consciousness, discovers; reflection purifies; but, to their ultimacy, certainty, and universality, the process by which they are revealed to us adds nothing. Observation, therefore, in its application to consciousness, reveals laws or grounds of knowledge, that are possessed of more than a factitious or purely inductive generality. This grand result of Scottish speculation,—the recognition of grounds of assurance regarding reality, not immediately given in observation,—concurs with its method in marking out its place among philosophical systems. Scottish speculation, in founding on an analysis of the contents of experience, is to some extent at one with a purely Empirical philosophy, but, by the result now indicated, it departs as widely from this form of speculation, as it does by its method from an *a priori* or Formal Ontology.

Existence, in its varied kinds, is known by us, according to the common doctrine of Reid and Stewart, only in so far as we observe and analyse the contents and conditions of our Experience. Our experience is twofold, for it is of Mind and of Matter. Of these, as realities independent of qualities or phænomena, we know and can know nothing. In thus founding on experience, Reid and Stewart accept the basis of an Empirical Philosophy, but the distinctive doctrine of the School comes out in its analysis of what experience, when viewed in its totality, contains and reveals of Being. The grand and distinctive doctrine of Scottish speculation,—the general position which Reid and Stewart seek to vindicate and illustrate is,—that the reality, be it of mind or matter, which by experience we can fully and directly compass, is always felt and believed by

us to be incommensurate with the sum total of that Being, of which the definite or comprehended reality is a part. Let any amount or kind of existence of which we have a definite hold in knowledge, be by us regarded as the whole of what is, and we are instinctively convinced that we are proceeding on a false assumption. Once a certain portion of experience is given us, we *naturally* and *necessarily* add to the consciousness we thus have, the notion or belief of being which transcends the directly experienced. Beyond our definite knowledge—beyond what we discover and define as qualities or phænomena—we are naturally and insuperably persuaded there is existence, which, however, we cannot lay hold of as we can that portion of being which we call Phænomenon. The being which lies behind phænomena—or the properly distinguishable and compassable—always escapes us as a definite object of knowledge. It is, therefore, out of the sphere of science proper, and is more strictly the object of *belief* than of knowledge. We have thus only a partial as opposed to a complete and exhaustive science of existence. Human knowledge, rigorously taken, is, on this doctrine, not a perfect whole; it is not commensurate with reality. It is, at the greatest, merely the fragment of a circle, which spans indeed the whole heaven of our vision, but which is at the same time discerned as incomplete, and yet admits not of being traced by us beyond our narrow horizon. Scottish speculation, by refusing to identify phænomena with the totality of existence, professing to afford only a partial and relative knowledge of Being, and avoiding a demonstrative speculative method, is thus marked off both from Empiricism and an Absolute Ontology.

The restriction by Reid, but especially the statement of this restriction as given by Stewart, of the sphere of philosophical science to the phænomena of the mind, has given rise to a considerable amount of criticism at the hands of French philosophers; such even as profess to abjure a definite or absolute Ontology—as, for example, M. Jouffroy, one of the ablest thinkers whom his country has produced in the present century, and whose writings are, in general, remarkable for their

admiring appreciation of Scottish speculation. Mr. Stewart states his views in the following passage:—

"The notions we annex to the words Matter and Mind, as is well remarked by Dr. Reid,[1] are merely relative. If I am asked, what I mean by Matter? I can only explain myself by saying, it is that which is extended, figured, coloured, moveable, hard or soft, rough or smooth, hot or cold;—that is, I can define it in no other way than by enumerating its sensible qualities. It is not matter, or body, which I perceive by my senses; but only extension, figure, colour, and certain other qualities, which the constitution of my nature leads me to refer to something which is extended, figured, and coloured. The case is precisely similar with respect to Mind. We are not immediately conscious of its existence, but we are conscious of sensation, thought, and volition; operations which imply the existence of something which feels, thinks, and wills. Every man, too, is impressed with an irresistible conviction, that all these sensations, thoughts, and volitions belong to one and the same being; to that being which he calls *himself;* a being which he is led, by the constitution of his nature, to consider as something distinct from his body, and as not liable to be impaired by the loss or mutilation of any of his organs. . . .

"If the foregoing observations be well founded, they establish the distinction between mind and matter without any long process of metaphysical reasoning: for if our notions of both are merely relative; if we know the one only by such sensible qualities as extension, figure, and solidity; and the other by such operations as sensation, thought, and volition, we are certainly entitled to say, that matter and mind, *considered as objects of human study*, are essentially different; the science of the former resting ultimately on the phenomena exhibited to our senses; that of the latter, on the phenomena of which we are conscious. Instead, therefore, of objecting to the scheme of materialism, that its conclusions are false, it would be more accurate to say, that its aim is unphilosophical. It proceeds on

[1] *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*, pp. 8, 9. [Reid's *Collected Works*, p. 513.]

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a misapprehension of the proper object of science; the difficulty which it professes to remove being manifestly placed beyond the reach of our faculties. Surely, when we attempt to explain the nature of that principle which feels and thinks and wills, by saying that it is a material substance, or that it is the result of material organization, we impose on ourselves by words; forgetting, that matter as well as mind is known to us by its qualities and attributes alone, and that we are totally ignorant of the essence of either."[1]

On this view M. Jouffroy offers some criticism. According to him it is the doctrine of the Scottish School:—"That the science of mind has for its end only the knowledge of the phænomena of mind—and that it cannot pass beyond this without overstepping its legitimate limits, and being destroyed. This doctrine belongs especially to Stewart; it is he who principally insists on the necessity of recalling the science of mind to the sphere of questions of fact, and completely banishing from it metaphysical inquiries.

"If the Scottish School had confined itself to the position that all we can know of the nature of the mind has necessarily for its point of departure the knowledge of the phænomena by which it is revealed to us, and, accordingly, that questions regarding the nature of the mind presuppose the investigation of those phænomena, and ought to be approached subsequently to that study, it would have kept within the truth. But when Stewart, proceeding farther, maintains that questions regarding the nature of the mind are insoluble, that they pass the reach of human intelligence, and are beyond the sphere in

[1] "Some metaphysicians, who appear to admit the truth of the foregoing reasoning, have further urged that, for any thing we can prove to the contrary, it is possible that the unknown substance which has the qualities of extension, figure, and colour, may be the same with the unknown substance which has the attributes of feeling, thinking, and willing. But besides that this is only an hypothesis, which amounts to nothing more than a mere possibility, even if it were true, it would no more be proper to say of mind, that it is material, than to say of body, that it is spiritual."—Compare *Life of Reid*, *Works*, vol. x. pp. 281-283; *Philosophical Essays*, *Works*, vol. v. p. 5, *et seq.*; *Dissertation*, *Works*, vol. i. p. 19; Hamilton's *Reid*, *Intellectual Powers*, *Essay* ii. c. xix., Matter and Space.

which it is fitted to move, and comes to the conclusion that these questions are not merely to be adjourned, but are foreign to the province of the science, he goes beyond the limits of truth."[1]

It is doubtless the clear and unambiguous doctrine both of Reid and Stewart that we can know and determine nothing regarding the nature of mind or matter,—in the way of inference or deduction from an abstract notion or definition, either of Being in general, or of Mind and Matter in particular. We have no *a priori*—no purely ontological knowledge of either. Both likewise concur in asserting that the object of science is always a phænomenon either of mind or matter. In other words, we never know mind or matter as absolute, as unqualified. But neither can fairly be regarded as maintaining the extreme opinion that the reality of phænomena is all we are able to assert, or even that it is only between the phænomena of mind and matter that we can maintain an essential difference. This holds true emphatically of Reid, and, discounting some rather unguarded expressions in the passage quoted from Stewart, it is also the doctrine of the latter thinker. This indeed is obvious, even from the passage now referred to, and it is the strongest which can be adduced in support of the opposite view. Mr. Stewart, in the passage in question, speaks of mind as *an object of science or of human study;* and seeks to enforce the principle that the only means whereby mind can be scientifically studied is the observation of its phænomena. We have, according to him, no means of knowing what mind is, apart from our experience of its manifestations in consciousness. Any theory in regard to the *nature* of mind, meaning by this, mind pure or absolute, non-phænomenal, is hypothetical, if not contradictory, and forms no legitimate part of the *science* of mind. But no meaning can in fairness be attached to the assertion by Mr. Stewart, of the phænomenal character of our knowledge of mind, which is inconsistent with his general doctrine that our knowledge

[1] *Œuvres de Reid. Préface du Traducteur*, pp. 87-90.—Compare Cousin, *Phil. Ecossaise*, IIme Leçon, p. 44; VIme Leç. p. 304, *et seq.*

of mind is relative. We have, according to Mr. Stewart, no absolute or irrespective knowledge of mind. A phænomenal knowledge is essentially a relative knowledge. It is the knowledge of that which is the property of a thing or being. It is therefore simply a knowing under relation, of which the phænomenon is the one term. Though, accordingly, the phænomenal be the aspect of reality which is properly open to science, this proximate side, as it were, of being, is not to be regarded as the actual totality, or even as all the reality of which we have assurance. Far from this, we cannot, by any process of rebellious thought, elevate the directly experienced into an absolute object of thought, or constitute it the measure of existence. It is given to us always in relation to existence beyond itself, with which it is, in our thought, inseparably connected. This *something* beyond, call it *substance, nature, essence,* is not known absolutely, just as its phænomena form no irrespective object of knowledge. It is, however, for us as the term of a necessary relation.

From the general doctrine, that we have no irrespective or purely phænomenal knowledge, it obviously follows, that we cannot affirm the distinction and contrast of the phænomena of mind and matter without extending the assertion to that reality, which is the condition of those phænomena; in other words, without maintaining their absolute or total distinction, as individual existences. This view is probably the least objectionable that can be taken of a point so delicate. The difficulty of the question is greatly increased by sundering the complex fact, and speaking of two kinds of existence (viz., substance and phænomenon) as really distinct. This is a wholly gratuitous attempt at severance, of what is never given to us apart, and is impossible for us, even in thought, to sunder. Yet when we raise the question as to the harmony of our (phænomenal) knowledge with absolute existence, we proceed on this illegitimate and impossible severance, and gratuitously set ourselves in search of a mode of re-uniting the irreducible synthesis of phænomenon and substance, or of knowledge and existence.

That such is, in truth, the doctrine of Stewart, might be shown not only from the whole tenor of his philosophy, but even from numerous passages bearing expressly on the point at issue. The following may suffice. It is given as a note relative to the passage referred to by M. Jouffroy, as pointing to the opposite doctrine:—"I have contented myself," says Mr. Stewart, "with defining *mind* to be that which feels, thinks, wills, hopes, fears, desires, &c. That my consciousness of these and other operations is *necessarily accompanied with a conviction of my own existence*, and with a conviction that all of them belong to *one* and the same *being*, is not a hypothesis but a *fact*, of which it is no more possible for me to doubt than of my own sensation or volition."[1]

Mr. Stewart's meaning, accordingly, in the passage referred to, when interpreted in accordance with the general analogy of his philosophy, amounts simply to this, that mind or matter, regarded absolutely, or out of relation to its qualities, is by us unknown and unknowable. Hence, to seek to determine what mind or matter is, as thus out of relation, is to substitute mere hypothesis in room of legitimate philosophy. Such procedure, besides being hypothetical, is, it may be added, suicidal. For the doctrine, that mind, as pure substance, is material, or extended, amounts to the contradiction, that the unqualified is the qualified, that the absolute is identical with the relative; and to the further absurdity, that matter qualified, or extended, is mind unqualified, or mind as pure substance.

The question as between M. Jouffroy and the Scottish School is thus reduced to a mere question of nomenclature, viz., as to the precise sphere of the term *knowledge* or *science*. Both admit the integrity of the fact; both allow the twofold aspect of reality. The point of difference is simply, as to whether the fact, on its absolute and incomprehensible side, can properly be said to be an object of knowledge or science. M. Jouffroy inclines to the affirmative; Stewart, as well as Reid, prefers speaking of existence on its incomprehensible side, as the object of *belief*, *conviction*, *faith*, rather than of

[1] *Works*, vol. ii., *Elements*, i. p. 74. Compare *Elements*, ii. p. 41.

knowledge or science. This is, at the best, a question regarding the instrument or means by which Metaphysics is to be built up; it in no degree affects the reality of its object. The Scottish School is not fairly open to the charge of identifying philosophy with the mere science of phænomena, and interdicting an adequate Ontology, though it is fundamentally opposed to a science of Being, constituted independently of observation, or the erection of the absolute of mind and matter into an irrespective object of speculation.

The Method and Scope of the Scottish School—in particular, its contrast with an Empirical theory of human knowledge—are well exemplified in its procedure against Hume. The metaphysical portion of the doctrine of Reid is simply a polemic against that thinker, and the exclusive principles on which he founds. Hume's aim, from beginning to end of his speculation, is to represent human knowledge as contradictory, and thereby to manifest the incompetency of a purely speculative conclusion on any subject. To represent Hume as necessarily setting at nought or violating any practical principle, in virtue of his speculative views, is to misconceive the scope of his speculations. To give full effect to his system, he must be regarded as, in the first instance, recognising as facts of experience, what all other men recognise and believe; in a word, the contents of the Common Sense of mankind. The work he set himself to accomplish was not to deny that mankind had certain beliefs, *e.g.*, in Cause, Substance, Self-Existence, Personal Identity, a Material World, far less to lead them to act in contradiction with those beliefs. But assuming these, he professed to show that they are truly contradictory in knowledge, and consequently, that the practical adoption of them, though a necessity of life, cannot speculatively be vindicated.

But how did he seek to set speculation and practice at variance? Simply by showing that the notions in question, when tested by what is assumed as the limit of human knowledge, involve contradictions. Our knowledge does not, according to the principle assumed by Hume, transcend experience. What we know is either an impression or *its copy*, an idea; in other

words, all human knowledge is merely of the phænomenal. Apply this test to the kind of knowledge supposed to be given in the notions, Cause, Substance, Self-Existence, the Infinite, and it will be found, that each of those notions, when we thus seek to identify it with any definite experience, is proved to be a contradiction, and must, therefore, lead to illusion when supposed to afford any guarantee of reality. The notions of Power and Substance have no prototype in any impression. Though we daily live and act on the assumption of the truth and validity of those notions, they are, notwithstanding, but the figments of custom, and the castings of imagination in a sphere which is entirely unreal.

The general result of Hume's speculation is thus the limitation of reality to the sphere of the phænomenal in consciousness. The moment we essay to rise beyond the sum of impressions and ideas, or *perceptions*, we fall into contradiction. Our knowledge becomes at variance with itself. We are in the sphere of the unthinkable, and the unreal. There is for us no existence beyond the perceptions which we fallaciously call *ours*. In other words, all existence is limited to purely subjective, or ideal phænomena. Mind or self cannot be regarded as one, simple, and identical, amid changing perceptions or modes of consciousness; it is simply a series of perceptions, many and various. Matter is a name we give to a particular class of these perceptions; such, to wit, as have for the condition of their existence the organs of sense, but which do not differ in kind, or specifically, from the other modifications of consciousness, such as *desire* or *volition*. Of existence, above or beyond perceptions, we have no knowledge or assurance.[1]

One example is sufficient to illustrate in detail the process of excision applied to knowledge, and through that to reality, by the subtle sceptic. Let us take Self-Existence, and, as intimately conjoined with it, Personal Identity. On Hume's principle, the proof of the non-reality of Self, and of Personal Identity, is of the easiest. Once admitted that all we know is a perception, *i.e.*, an ideal phænomenon, self-existence, in the ordinary sense of

[1] See *Treatise of Human Nature*, vol. i. pp. 123, 124, and 370.

the phrase, is a contradiction. For Self is supposed to be *that* which, while revealed *in* and *by* a perception, or modification of consciousness, is at the same time not absolutely that perception or modification, but something beyond—or that of which the perception is a passing property. Now, on the principles of Identity and Contradiction, no single perception or impression can be a perception, *i.e.*, itself, and its own subject, or something more than itself, at the same time. In the knowledge of a perception alone, we have no notion of Self. If we know nothing but perceptions,—if we can reach no assurance of reality above what is given in the knowledge of perceptions—self-existence, in the sense explained, must be given up as a mere illusion of the imagination, as Hume holds it to be.

With Self-Existence falls the notion of Personal Identity, or of the existence of an invariable Self amid varying perceptions. All we know is merely an impression or idea, *i.e.*, a perception. Perceptions are individual and various. Self is not any single perception; but, as one and identical, is that to which all our perceptions together are related. It is something different from any one perception, and the same amid all. As, however, we have no knowledge of anything but perceptions, which are various, we have no knowledge or assurance of an invariable self. It is not one of our perceptions. It cannot be identified with any one of these without a contradiction. It is, therefore, for us as nothing.

"It must be some one impression that gives rise to every real idea. But Self or Person is not any one impression, but that to which our several impressions and ideas are supposed to have a reference. If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must continue invariably the same, through the whole course of our lives, since Self is supposed to exist after that manner. But there is no impression constant and invariable. Pain and pleasure, grief and joy, passions and sensations, succeed each other, and never all exist at the same time. It cannot, therefore, be from any of these impressions, or from any other, that the idea of Self is derived; and consequently there is no such idea.". . . .

"For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. *I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can* OBSERVE *anything but the perception.* When my perceptions are removed for any time, as by sound sleep, so long am I insensible of *myself;* and may truly be said not to exist. And were all my perceptions removed by death, . . . I should be entirely annihilated. . . . If any one, upon serious and unprejudiced reflection, thinks he has a different notion of *himself,* I must confess I can reason no longer with him. All I can allow him is, that he may be in the right as well as I, and that we are essentially different in this particular. He may, perhaps, *perceive something simple and continued,* which he calls *himself;* though I am certain there is no such principle in me. But setting aside some metaphysicians of this kind, I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that *they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity,* and are in a perpetual flux and movement. . . . The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, repass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. There is properly no *simplicity* in it at one time, nor *identity* in different; whatever natural propension we may have to imagine that simplicity and identity. The comparison of the theatre must not mislead us. *They are the successive perceptions only, that constitute the mind;* nor have we the most distant notion of the place where these scenes are represented, or of the materials of which it is composed."[1]

We have thus, according to Hume, no apprehension or assurance of Self, nor of an invariable element of existence. All we apprehend, is a perception, which is at once the object of the act and the act itself. Objects are perceptions, and perceptions are objects. These constitute at once the sphere of knowledge and the sum of reality; and to attribute to a per-

[1] *Treatise of Human Nature,* vol. i. pp. 437-440.

ception (phænomenon) unity or identity, or regard it as also the subject of other perceptions, is to fall at once into contradiction.

The question arises, Can Hume be met, or must we allow this annihilation of Self and Self-Identity, and rest satisfied with the reality he admits? This is the problem of what has been called the Scottish School of Metaphysics, in one of its fundamental aspects. This school controverts the conclusions of Hume, re-asserts Self-Existence and Identity, in the senses already explained.

Reid and Stewart agree with Hume in regarding *self* as not properly an immediate object of consciousness. Self is not directly presented to consciousness as certain other objects, such as pain, volition, sensation, &c. It is not immediately apprehended as a phænomenon in consciousness. It is not known as any one, nor as all of the modifications of consciousness. "Our own existence," says Mr. Stewart, "is not a direct or immediate object of consciousness, in the strict and logical meaning of that term. We are conscious of sensation, thought, desire, volition; but we are not conscious of the existence of Mind itself."[1] But though not immediately conscious of Self, as thus explained, we are not without a conviction of its reality. "The moment," proceeds Mr. Stewart, "that in consequence of such an impression (*i.e.*, on the organs of sense), a sensation is excited, we learn two facts at once, the existence of the sensation, and our own existence as sentient beings; in other words, the very first exercise of consciousness necessarily implies a *belief*, not only of the present existence of what is felt, but of the present existence of *that* which feels and thinks; or (to employ plainer language), the present existence of that being which I denote by the words *I* and *myself*. Of these facts, however, it is the former alone of which we can properly be said to be conscious, agreeably to the rigorous interpretation of the expression. A conviction of the latter, although it seems to be so inseparable from the exercise of consciousness, that it can scarcely be considered as posterior to it in the order of *time*, is

[1] *Elements*, vol. ii. p. 41; compare *Phil. Essays*, *Works*, vol. v. p. 58.

yet (if I may be allowed to make use of a scholastic distinction), posterior to it in the order of *nature;* not only as it supposes consciousness to be already awakened by some sensation, or some other mental affection; but as it is evidently rather a judgment accompanying the exercise of that power, than one of its immediate intimations concerning its appropriate class of internal phenomena. It appears to me, therefore, more correct to call *the belief* of our own existence, a *concomitant* or accessory of the exercise of consciousness, than to say, that our existence is a fact falling under the *immediate* cognisance of consciousness, like the existence of the various agreeable or painful sensations which external objects excite in our minds."[1]

This passage hardly brings out with sufficient prominence the fact of the identity, short only of absolute convertibility, of the modes and the existence of the subject of consciousness. I am, in so far as I am conscious; and existence is realised by me only as I am the subject of conscious modifications. But, apart from this, the statement now given, contains an adequate answer to Hume on the point in question. The contradiction, or absurdity, alleged by him to be involved in the notion of Self, is founded on the assumption that the object, and the only object, of human knowledge, is a perception, or modification of consciousness, irrespectively considered; whereas the reply of Stewart alleges that there is no knowledge of modifications of consciousness without the knowledge of their relation to Self; Self and a perception being the necessary terms of every act of our knowledge that has the latter for its direct object. We have thus ground for holding at once the reality of the perception, and the Self of which it is, and is known to be the modification. This answer, therefore, subverts the principle on which Hume's relegation of Self proceeds, by obviating the force of the argument from the contradictory character of the notion, and, at the same time, affords an independent foundation for our conviction of its reality, which is unassailable by reasoning. For as, on the one hand, we cannot prove or

[1] *Elements*, vol. ii. p. 42.

give a reason for holding this belief in the reality of Self, so, on the other, it is incapable of disproof by us; and is naturally accepted by us as true and valid, so long as it cannot be discarded as false on grounds higher than itself, or shown to involve any contradiction with other beliefs of the same class. It is a final and necessary deliverance regarding Being, given in the free exercise of our faculties; and, resting in its truth, we find satisfaction at once for our intellectual nature, and our moral instincts.

Among the other fundamental points on which Reid combats the results of Hume's speculations, there is conspicuous the question of External Perception. The chapter in the *Treatise of Human Nature*[1] is very able; and, while sifting and setting in a clear light the true import of a Representative theory of Perception, it is not less valuable in pointing out the only sufficient ground on which it is possible to vindicate the reality of material existence. But on this subject I can here do little more than refer to the statement by Mr. Stewart, of the true scope of Reid's polemic,[2] as directed, not in any way to prove, far less afford additional reasons for holding, the reality of an object external to, and independent of, the percipient; but simply to subvert the narrow theory of human knowledge, on which it was attempted to show the contradictory character of the notion, and consequently the impossibility of the fact, of external existence. Hume expressly admits that there is in the human mind an original or instinctive belief, and a supposed immediate knowledge, of external existence. This knowledge and belief it was necessary he should accept as a fact, in order to allow full scope for his speculative reduction of it to absurdity. He concedes the reality of this, as well as the other beliefs of the Common Sense of mankind, as matter of experience; but only that he may show the contradiction of such a judgment, with other deliverances of our mental constitution, and thus, by setting the human consciousness at variance with itself, cast discredit on the whole of its teachings.

[1] Vol. i. p. iv., § 2.

[2] *Phil. Essays*, *Works*, vol. v., pp. 90-92.

The process, indeed, by which Hume effects the reduction of the notion of external reality to absurdity, is not less easy than the process by which he would cast out of the sphere of knowledge and being, self-existence. For if the doctrine of a Representative Perception be allowed; and, if all we apprehend be merely the unextended, *i.e.*, an ideal phænomenon; it is, of course, an absurdity to suppose that such a kind of existence can resemble, and therefore represent, an outlying unextended or material reality, *i.e.*, its contradictory opposite. Reid's doctrine of a direct perception of material qualities, as extension, figure, &c., subverts the basis of a Representative Perception, on which Hume proceeds. We are directly percipient, according to Reid, of that which is in no respect a modification of our own minds. The object in perception is external to us, in the sense of being a property of which we, the percipients, are not the subject. For such is the notion of *externality*, on which Reid explicitly proceeds: "Everything," to quote his own words, "is said to be in the mind, of which the mind is the *subject*. . . . Excepting the mind itself, and things in the mind, all other things are said to be *external*. It ought, therefore, to be remembered, that this distinction between things in the mind, and things external, is not meant to signify the *place* of the things we speak of, but their *subject*."[1] The object in perception is thus not a sensation or modification of our own minds, far less an unextended or ideal object in consciousness; but extended or material qualities, directly revealed as, and believed by us to be, the property of a subject really different from the percipient mind. The contradiction, consequently, of holding that we can know material reality, as represented in an ideal phænomenon, is done away with; and the original instinctive belief of mankind, in an external object, by being made to rest not on an impossible, because contradictory, representative knowledge, but on a direct apprehension of the object itself, is vindicated from the charge of standing opposed to the legitimate results of speculation. Here, as in the vindication of the reality of self-existence, Reid and

[1] Reid's *Collected Works*, p. 221.

Stewart only primarily seek to show that the notion or belief of external reality is unassailable on the ground of its involving a contradiction. The direct apprehension we are allowed to possess of material qualities is accordingly to be accepted by us as a legitimate ground of assurance regarding existence, which is in no respect a modification of the percipient mind.[1]

The replies made by the Scottish School to Hume, on certain other points, no less important, afford illustrations of the principle involved in the vindication of the reality of Self-Existence; in particular, the theory of Causation. But on further details we cannot now enter.

The great principle, of which some illustration has been offered, in respect to the proportion of direct or positive Knowledge to Existence, may be regarded as the point which the speculations of Reid and Stewart have brought most prominently before the view of reflecting men; and, whatever may be the modifications which the course of speculation is likely to impose on it, as the general heritage left by them to Philosophy. Their special Metaphysical doctrines proceed on this principle. Their Philosophy proper, if it be well founded, must act as a barrier against all attempts at identifying the fragment of science which man may at any time rescue from the abyss of ignorance, with that Absolute which it holds, but holds never to disengulf for him. In its varied

[1] The fullest and most recent development of the doctrine of Intuitive Perception, is contained in Sir William Hamilton's *Discussions on Philosophy, Philosophy of Perception*, and in his edition of the *Collected Works of Reid*, Notes B, C, D, and D*. The views of Reid, Stewart, and Brown are compared and discussed with candour, clearness, and acuteness, by Professor Alison, in a Paper read by him before the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and published in the *Transactions* (vol. xx. p. iv.), entitled, "Observations on the Speculations of Dr. Brown, and other recent Metaphysicians, regarding the Exercise of the Senses" (1853).

The *Essays in Philosophy* by Mr. Fraser, the successor of Sir William Hamilton in the chair of Logic and Metaphysics, Edinburgh, contain fresh and able discussions of the most important questions that have occupied the attention of the Scottish School of Speculation. Mr. Mansel of Oxford has recently laid those who take an interest in philosophical studies under great obligations, by his able and very valuable article on *Metaphysics*, in the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

applications, this principle of partial knowledge, of "philosophic nescience," guards great realities for man; and by its discipline of humility, and its grand lesson, that wisdom is more than knowledge, faith than sight, keeps alive in him the spirit of reverence, and a sense of the unseen;—purifying, elevating, and developing the MAN, even when the THINKER is left to partial science, or, it may be, positive darkness and doubt. By indicating the existence of what transcends experience, and yet declaring man's relations thereto, it gives grandeur and solemnity to a brief and precarious earthly life,—teaching him that the present is only valuable in its relation to the future, and affording him assurance that his destiny is somehow interwoven with the great scheme of things, whose issues are ever flowing on towards more perfect evolution.

APPENDIX A.

LETTERS OF MR. STEWART.

[The greater portion of Mr. Stewart's correspondence, including both letters written by and to him, is now irrecoverably lost, or has been destroyed.—(See *Preface* to *Memoir*.) Mr. Stewart was, moreover, averse from letter-writing; and few of his letters which have been preserved are directly available for the purposes of biography. The letters by him of greatest interest, were probably those which he wrote at different times, to one or other of his most intimate friends, on the subject of the French Revolution, in its earlier stages. He was particularly anxious to study the Revolution and its consequences, from the deep and intelligent interest which he took in Political Philosophy, and with a view also to his own Lectures on that subject. His previous acquaintance with some of the leading men of science and letters in France, afforded him rare and ample facilities for studying the character of the revolutionary movements in that country. Several of the letters which he wrote from France at this period, are unfortunately lost, besides the Journals of observation which he kept while in Paris. Those which are here subjoined, in whole or in part, afford but limited specimens of the shrewdness of observation and playfulness of humour, especially in judging of the characters of persons of high public pretensions, with whom he was occasionally brought into contact, which formed, to many of his intimate friends, a leading point of his character.]

I.—To the Rev. Archibald Alison.[1]

Edinburgh, 13*th April* [1780 *or* 81.]

My dear Archy,—I would have written you sooner, but have not been able to summon up sufficient resolution. When I recollect the many happy days I have spent in company with you and Matthew Stewart,[2] my mind is perfectly overpowered. You knew how I loved him, and how completely all my habits were formed to his. Never, I am persuaded, were two men more dependent on each other. I now feel myself solitary and helpless, and deprived of the friend who knew every secret of my heart, and directed me in every step of my life. Oh, Archy, I could not have believed that it was possible

[1] Mr. Stewart's friend, the Rev. Archibald Alison, was born in 1757. Mr. Alison entered the Church of England, and was for some time curate of Brancepeth, near Durham. He exchanged Brancepeth for Sudbury, in Northamptonshire. He subsequently held the livings of High Ercall, Roddington, and Kenley, in Shropshire. Mr. Alison was made prebendary of Sarum in 1798. He accepted the senior incumbency of St. Paul's Chapel, Edinburgh, in 1800, which he held until his death in 1839. He married, in 1783, Dorothea, daughter of Dr. Gregory, Professor of Physic in the University of Edinburgh. Mr. Alison was a popular and eloquent preacher. He was the author of a volume of Sermons, chiefly on the *Signs of the Times* (1814). His work on *Taste*, by which he is best known, is noticed at pp. xxviii, xxix, of *Memoir*.

[2] Matthew Stewart was very distantly, if at all, related to Mr. Stewart. He died at the early age of twenty-eight, when he was about to take orders in the Church of England.

Among Mr. Stewart's most valued early friends were, besides Mr. Matthew Stewart and the Rev. Mr. Alison, Mr. William Robertson, a son of Principal Robertson, and afterwards a Lord of Session, by the title of Lord Robertson; Mr. Dugald Bannatyne, Glasgow; Dr. James Gregory; Mr. Dalzel, Professor of Greek in the University of Edinburgh; Dr. Robertson Barclay; Sir Gilbert Blane; Lord Glenlee, &c. The list of his friends included, at a later period, besides the majority of the names of his more eminent pupils already mentioned, Lord Lauderdale; Lord Minto, father and son; Lord Selkirk; Mr. Playfair, Professor of Natural Philosophy in the University; Lord Woodhouselee; Sir James Hall, long President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh; Mr. Thomas Thomson, Principal Clerk of the Court of Session; and Dr. John Thomson, Professor, first, of Surgery to the College of Surgeons, and afterwards, of Pathology in the University; Mr. John Whishaw, and Mr. George Wilson, of Lincoln's Inn, London; Rev. Sir H. Moncreiff Wellwood; Mr. John Macfarlane, Advocate, Edinburgh; Professor W. P. Alison, Edinburgh; Mr. John Allen; Dr. John Leyden; Dr. Samuel Parr; Gen. Sir George Hewitt; the poets Campbell and Moore, &c.

for me to have survived him, far less that I should have been able, within a few days after his death, to have engaged in my usual business. Indeed, I am astonished at my want of sensibility, and often reproach myself when I feel, in company, a disposition to cheerfulness. But his death has left an impression on my mind, that I am persuaded will never leave it, and which has almost entirely destroyed my relish for all my former pursuits. I can fix my attention on nothing; and the only satisfaction I enjoy, is in lamenting over him with his mother and sisters.—Pray write me soon, and believe me most affectionately yours, DUGALD STEWART.

II.—To the Same.

DOUAY, 18*th June* 1788.

MY DEAR ARCHY,—I heard Sheridan the two first days,[1] and was disappointed. He has quickness and wit, and something that passes with his hearers in Westminster Hall for eloquence; but he neither is, nor ever will be, a great speaker. The cry is at present so much in his favour that every criticism, either on his matter or manner, is heard with contempt; but when the speech is published, I will venture to say that the delusion will be at an end. Of the *business* part of the speech I do not pretend to judge (although, I am certain, that Fox would have stated the argument with infinitely greater perspicuity and force); but as to his *eloquence*, I really do not think it much better than his father's flourishes in his rhetorical lectures, and it is upon *this* that the merit of the speech is principally rested by his admirers. Indeed, whatever the newspaper writers may choose to say upon the subject, you may be assured from me, that excepting with a very few people in the House, neither his reasoning, nor his detail of facts commanded the attention; and the only thing that interested the whole assembly was a set of *composed* declamations, which he had scattered through the speech at proper distances from each other, and which differed so remarkably from the other parts of it, both in point

[1] While passing through London, on his way to the Continent.

of expression (for the language was as artificial as that of Gibbon), and in the manner in which they were pronounced, that I am perfectly astonished that it should have received so very high applause from many people who should know better. But I must delay a more particular account of him till I see you. I should be sorry to talk in this way in public, for it would be considered as mere petulance and affectation; but I can assure you his eloquence hardly once touched me, and that I could not see the affected raptures of the people who were sitting near me without some degree of indignation. I understand he made a still greater display the last day; but I hardly feel any regret at having missed the opportunity of hearing it, for I am sure, if I know the full extent of any man's powers in the way of eloquence, it is Sheridan's. He is not once to be compared either to Fox, Pitt, or Burke. Indeed, I am assured, that nothing has been heard half so pathetic and sublime as Burke's peroration at the beginning of last session.

We have now been ten days on the Continent; but I was so busy in seeking out a comfortable house to board in, and in arranging our little affairs, that I have hardly been able till now, to command an hour to myself. And even at present, I write this, with Ramsay[1] sitting by me, in a room adjoining to mine, and repeating over *avoir* and *être* to his French master, so that I scarcely know what I have been writing. We are lodged in the house of a Benedictine monk. All the abbeys in this neighbourhood have houses belonging to them in some of the fortified towns, to which they may retire in case of war. Such a house is called the *refuge* of the abbey, and is commonly inhabited by one of the monks, who keeps it in order. *That* in which we are boarded at present belongs to the rich abbey of St. Amand. It is at least as large as Heriot's Hospital, and is inhabited only by the monk, Mr. Ramsay, myself, and a few servants. It is in the environs of the town, and has a very large and excellent garden, in which the monk spends most of his time, and where we have an opportunity of enjoying his

[1] Mr. George Ramsay, son of Mr. Ramsay of Barnton, near Edinburgh, of whom Mr. Stewart had charge.

conversation. He keeps an excellent table, which he enjoys very much himself, and has constantly some of his friends with him, so that, on the whole, we are very comfortably situated. I think we shall continue here at least three weeks, during which time I request of you to write me more than once.

Adieu. God bless you. Yours ever sincerely, D. S.

Direct for me, Chez M. l'Abbé Farquharson, President du Collège des Ecossois, à Douay, La Flandre.

III.—To Dugald Bannatyne, Esq.[1]

Marseilles, *4th August* 1788.

My dear Dugald,—I write this from Marseilles, where [we] arrived the day before yesterday, after a very pleasant journey, in the course of which we visited the Roman antiquities at Nîmes and in the neighbourhood. Indeed, the whole of our journey from Paris (which has employed us nearly a fortnight), has been most delightful, making allowance for the intolerable heat of the climate, and the swarms of flies, which give me little rest, night or day, and which, I hope, will reconcile me for the rest of my life to the cold and wet weather of Ayrshire. I spent some hours yesterday with the Abbé Raynal,[2] who has been settled for several years at Marseilles; and I think I never saw a man whose conversation forms a more remarkable contrast [with] his writings. He is good-natured and communicative, but the most trifling, *clavering* creature I ever met with. He is now seventy-six, but still in good health, and still writing. He is at present engaged in a history of the effects produced by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. You may believe he is not a little pleased with the revolution which is going on in this country.

I begin to long very impatiently to [see] my little man,[3] who, I hope, continues to be a good boy, and to enjoy the same

[1] See above, *Memoir*, p. xviii.

[2] See above, *Memoir*, p. lvii.

[3] His son Matthew.

health as before. I have spent the summer as agreeably as I could have wished, and yet I don't think it would be an easy matter to persuade me to leave him for six months.—Believe me ever, dear D., your affectionate brother, D. S.

We set out this afternoon for Geneva, and shall probably pay a visit on our way to the *Grande Chartreuse* in Dauphiné. I think it likely that we shall remain nearly a month in Switzerland.

IV.—To Rev. A. Alison.

[Paris, 27*th Aug.* 1788.]

My dear Archy,—You will already have seen by the papers the wonderful revolution which has taken place here within these two days. I can say nothing farther on the subject till we meet, &c., &c. The Archbishop, I believe, has set out for Rome.

The French Academy at their *séance* the day before yesterday (being the fête of St. Louis), gave the *prix d'utilité* to M. Neckar, for his late work on the importance of religious opinions. Whether the academicians have changed their creed, or whether it is barely a compliment to the new minister, I do not pretend to say. I am indeed assured, that the thing was determined a considerable time before the change of the ministry had taken place. Both events happened the same day. An English gentleman, who was present, told me, that he never heard such general and hearty acclamations as when the determination of the Academy was announced. How much have I regretted that I did not arrive in Paris till the evening of that day!

In very great haste, yours most affectionately,

D. S.

V.—To the Same.

Paris, 10*th May* 1789.

My dear Archy,—I arrived here early on Friday morning, after a journey, which on the whole was far from disagreeable.

The weather was most delightful; and the country, at least on this side of the water, and in the county of Kent, in the greatest possible beauty. In the neighbourhood of Paris, the trees are already in full leaf.

The States-General were opened *two days* before my arrival, by a speech from the King, and another from M. Neckar. I am very doubtful, however, if I should have been able to procure admission, even if I had arrived in time, as a number of English people of the first rank applied for tickets, without success. Arbuthnot[1] was fortunate enough to obtain one, and to get into one of the best seats in the House, by means of his landlord, who happens to be surgeon to the Master of Ceremonies. And he thinks that with a little difficulty he might perhaps have been able to procure another for me through the same channel. It was by all accounts one of the finest ceremonies that was ever seen; but I must refer you for particulars to a letter from A. to his father, in which he has given a full description of it. I have read the King's speech, which I think excellent, and which I am told was extremely well pronounced. Neckar's lasted upwards of three hours, and according to A.'s account, although it contained some very striking passages, was not one of his best appearances. I suspect, indeed, from all accounts I have received of it, that this was the case. But whatever was its merits as a composition (of which we shall be able to judge from its publication in a few days), it certainly answered most completely the purpose which Neckar had in view, as almost every sentence was received with the loudest acclamations of "*Vive le Roi!—M. Neckar!*" His voice failed him after he had read about five minutes; and the rest of his speech was read by a friend. He appeared perfectly cool and possessed of himself, but I am told is awkward in his appearance and manner, and not a graceful speaker in public.

The day before the meeting, there was a grand procession of the King and Royal Family, and members of the States-General to the church. The sermon was preached by the

[1] Probably Robert Arbuthnot, Esq., Edinburgh, elder brother of the late Sir William Arbuthnot, Bart.

Bishop (I think) of Nancy, who is a natural brother of the Duke of Orleans; and I suppose had been a very patriotic one, as many passages in it were received with loud acclamations by the audience. I fancy this is the first instance in the history of the Christian Church of a preacher being clapped by his hearers. While the procession was passing, there was a universal cry of "*Vive le Roi!*" but no notice whatever was taken of the Queen. And to mortify her still more, there was a cry of *Vive la Duchesse d'Orléans!* (who walked immediately behind the Queen), *Vive cette vertueuse Princesse!* I am told the Queen seemed to be extremely affected and agitated on the occasion. By the way, the pamphlet you lent to Lady F. meets with a good deal of credit in this country. Some of the facts which are stated in it are known to be false, but the great outlines of the story are very generally believed. It is supposed to have been partly with a view of expressing their antipathy at *her*, that the Cardinal de R.[1] was chosen a deputy both by the noblesse, by the clergy, and by the *Tiers Etat.* By the clergy he was chosen *par acclamation*, without the formality of a vote. He has, however, declined coming to Versailles, on account of a pretended indisposition; but as seems to be commonly thought, from the timidity of his character, and his unwillingness to give offence to the Court.

I am sorry to hear of the injudicious choice which the *Tiers Etat* have in general made of their deputies. By far the majority of them are lawyers, who are by no means respected by the people of rank in this country, and who are certainly of all men the least qualified for new-modelling a constitution. Besides these, however, there are a few very respectable men of letters, and a considerable number of the most enlightened and liberal among the nobility. The elections are not yet entirely over, and particularly that for Paris is still going on, and pro-

[1] The Prince de Rohan, Bishop of Strasbourg, Cardinal, and Grand-Almoner of France. He had recently stood his trial before the Parliament of Paris (1786), on account of his connection with Madame de la Mothe in the affair of the diamond necklace. His acquittal had given great satisfaction to the populace of Paris, whose feeling against the Queen was strong.

bably will do so for some days. Bailly,[1] the astronomer, is secretary to the electors, and it is thought will be one of their deputies. The Marquis de Condorcet was not returned by the Noblesse, and it is doubtful whether he will be able to obtain a seat at all. What is still more remarkable, the Duc de la Rochefoucault, although one of the most respectable men in France, and although a decided friend of the *Tiers Etat*, has not yet been chosen by that order. There is some probability that he may be chosen for Paris.

It is curious, that among the deputies who have been already chosen, there are several Protestants; among others, a Protestant *clergyman*, who lives at Nîmes,[2] and who is a friend of M. Guyot.[3] I shall send you, if you choose it, a small print, representing the three orders in their uniforms. The noblesse were dressed *à la Henri IV.;* the *Tiers Etat*, in the dress which lawyers wear at court,—and, I understand, made, on the whole, rather a blackguard appearance.

The hold which Neckar has at present of the public opinion in France, is perfectly astonishing. Whether he will be able to weather the storm is very doubtful; but whatever may be his own fate, there is undoubtedly a spirit already raised in every corner of the kingdom, which will not subside without producing some important revolution. Political pamphlets, and political prints, are now as commonly on the stalls here as at London.

The States-General have hitherto been employed entirely, and it is thought will still be so for a considerable time, in settling preliminaries. I am much mortified to hear that no strangers are to be admitted to their deliberations; but I have not as yet given up all hopes. Lord Daer[4] by his dilatoriness

[1] Member of the French Academy, the Academy of Science, and that of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres, took a prominent part in the proceedings of the period. He was the first President of the States-General; and to his influence was owing, in great measure, the taking of the famous Tennis Court Oath. He was subsequently Mayor of Paris. He fell a victim to the fury of the extreme democratic party in 1793.

[2] The afterwards famous Rabot de St. Etienne.

[3] M. Guyot was a Swiss clergyman of considerable literary attainments, and an intimate friend of Mr. Stewart.

[4] Eldest son of the Earl of Selkirk.—See *supra*, p. lviii.

has trifled away his time in London with his brother, John, always waiting till the States should proceed to *serious* business, and by so doing has lost the only opportunity which he could possibly have had of seeing all the orders assembled together; as it is understood that when particular questions come to be discussed, they will divide themselves into a number of separate *bureaux*.

Some days before my reaching Paris, there had been a very serious disturbance, which however had not the most distant connexion with the present state of politics. It took its rise from an unguarded expression of an eminent manufacturer about the wages of workmen. About a hundred persons were killed and wounded, according to the most moderate computation, before the military were able to disperse the rioters completely.

On my arrival here, I found, to my great mortification, that Madame de Lessert, whose family was the only one at Paris, in which I found myself perfectly at home, had just set out for Switzerland with her daughter, and what is worse, that they will probably leave it much about the time of our intended tour. I think it likely that we shall remain here till the end of June.

I had a great deal more to say, but I must despatch this instantly to catch the post. Best compliments to Mrs. Alison, and to all my other friends.—Believe me ever yours, very sincerely, DUGALD STEWART.

VI.—To the Same.

PARIS, 30*th May* 1789.

MY DEAR ARCHY,—I received your letter to-day, and along with it a letter from Mr. Miller,[1] which makes my mind perfectly easy for the present with respect to Matthew and the children at Cumnock. I am too happy to find that your letters contain no disagreeable accounts of my other friends, for there are so many people in whom I am interested, and such is the foolish anxiety of my temper, that when I am from home, I am almost afraid to hear of the arrival of the post. Don't

[1] Mr. Stewart's brother-in-law, Rev. Mr. Miller of Cumnock.

imagine from this that I am in low spirits; on the contrary, I am in perfect health, and have spent my time since I came here as agreeably as I could have wished.

The States-General here have hitherto done nothing, nor indeed have any of the orders as yet constituted themselves into a body. The first question which naturally engaged their attention after their assembling at Versailles, related to the mode of their deliberation; whether it should be *par tête ou par ordre.* The Noblesse and clergy (particularly the former, for the latter body contains a much greater number of *patriots* than could have been expected) wished that the three orders should in the first place proceed separately, *à la vérification de leurs pouvoirs;* by which I presume they mean, an examination of the legality of the elections, and of the different powers, whether limited or unlimited, which the deputies have received from their constituents. To this proposal the *Tiers Etat* refused to accede, because they insisted that each of the orders was as much interested in ascertaining the legality of the elections in the other orders as in its own, and that therefore even this preliminary business should be discussed in a common Assembly, or at least by commissaries named by the three orders for the purpose. It is understood to have been their intention at first, if a majority of the Noblesse and Clergy should continue to oppose their claim, to invite such individuals among these bodies to join them as were willing to deliberate with them in common, and to address the King to give his sanction to the States-General so constituted; but this measure seems now to be laid aside, probably in consequence of their finding the *very great* majority of the Noblesse, who appear to be determined to support their own pretensions. At a late meeting of that body, it was resolved to adhere to the mode of deliberating *par ordre*, not only on the preliminary questions concerning the verification of their powers, but on all questions whatever. On this occasion, indeed, there was a considerable number who did not vote; and there were, I think, *sixteen* who protested, among which last number were, the Duke of Orleans, the Duke of Liancourt, the Duke of Roche-

foucault (who was chosen one of the deputies for the Noblesse of Paris), the Marquis de Montesquieu, the Marquis de la Fayette, and some others of very high distinction. How the matter will end, it is very difficult to foresee, for the *Tiers Etat* seem to be perfectly united, and to proceed with great deliberation and coolness. Some seem to think, that if every plan of conciliation should fail, they will return home to their constituents without giving their consent to any taxes whatever, in which case consequences of a very serious nature must follow. In the meantime, the King has addressed a letter to the three orders, desiring them to send commissioners to state the points upon which they differ, in presence of the *Garde des Sceaux*, and some other members of the Council, that his Majesty, after being informed of the arguments on both sides, may have it in his power to operate more effectually towards a reconciliation. M. Neckar will probably on this occasion find himself under a necessity of being more explicit with respect to his own wishes than he has hitherto been. He has avoided as much as possible to declare his private opinion upon the great question concerning the mode of deliberation, and I suppose wished to leave himself at liberty to act as circumstances might direct him. This was perhaps the wisest plan, on the whole, for a man placed in his difficult situation; but it has hurt him not a little in the opinion of the more violent Republicans. Among these, one of the most distinguished for his abilities, is the Comte de Mirabeau, who wants nothing but a good character to make him a leading man in this country. The Economists are all at bottom against Neckar, but I think he still maintains his ground in the opinion of the more moderate people of every description. Even those who are most disposed to criticise his conduct, do not pretend to be able to name another person who is qualified to succeed him.

4th June.

I had written so far, intending to have sent my letter by last post, but I was too late in bringing it to a conclusion, in consequence of which I have a few other particulars to add to what I have already written.

The Noblesse and the Clergy did not meet on Monday or Tuesday, as Sunday was *Pentecost*, and the two following days *jours de fête*, but the *Tiers Etat* continued their deliberations, without however doing anything of much consequence. Of late they have admitted strangers into the gallery, which they are always to do for the future, and I accordingly went to Versailles the day before yesterday to hear one of their debates. The subject (which I have not time to explain to you at present) was not very interesting, but on the whole I was very well pleased with what I heard. The Comte de Mirabeau spoke repeatedly, along with several others, who I think want nothing but practice to make them very good debaters. Many of the members have already laid aside the *costume* prescribed to them, and appeared with coloured clothes and with swords. One man, who I presume has seen our House of Commons, was dressed in boots and buckskin breeches. They have adopted all our Parliamentary expressions, to a degree which is somewhat ludicrous. *Faire une motion ; Proposer un amendement*, &c. ; *L'honorable membre qui vient de parler*, &c., with a great many others. In speaking of themselves too, they always call themselves *Les Communes*, and not *Tiers Etat*. The principal speakers who have hitherto distinguished themselves are, M. Rabot de St. Etienne (the Protestant clergyman whom I formerly mentioned, and who has decidedly at present the principal lead in the Assembly), M. de Volney (the traveller), M. Target (a very eminent lawyer, and a Member of the French Academy), the Comte de Mirabeau, the Chevalier Dupont [de Nemours] (the economist), besides a variety from the provinces, whose names have never been heard of before. The name of Rabot de St. Etienne is at present as well known in France as that of Fox in England.

VII.—To the Same.

[Paris, 27*th June* 1789.]

My dear Archy,—I had begun a very long letter for you, which I find I cannot possibly get ready for you till next post.

I must therefore content myself, at present, with mentioning to you, that the day before yesterday the King sent a letter to the Clergy and the Noblesse, desiring them, by every consideration of regard for his person, and of attachment to their country, to unite themselves *instantly* with the *Tiers Etat*, which they accordingly did that very day; and, accordingly, M. Bailly acts at present as President of the *Etats Généraux*, with the Archbishop of Vienne on his right hand, and the Comte de Clermont Tonnerre (who had been President of the Chamber of Noblesse) on his left. It is thought that they will change their president every two or three weeks, at least for some time, and that they will take them alternately from their different orders.

There was no business done yesterday at Versailles, and there will be none to-day. People's heads are at present so light that, I suppose, it will be some time before they can settle themselves to anything serious. It is supposed that the *Etats Généraux* will begin their proceedings by drawing up a declaration of rights. D. S.

VIII.—To the Same.

Paris, 17*th Sept.* 1789.

My dear Archy,—I cannot tell you how happy your letter has made me. To think of passing another winter in your society is more than I could have looked forward to; and it is a prospect which gives me double pleasure at present, when a *long* absence from home has made me more sensible than ever of the comfort of speaking to a friend.—I would willingly flatter myself with the hope that something *must* be done for you in the course of a few months; but, at any rate, I hope you will not delay any longer an event which depends only on yourself, —I mean the publication of your papers.[1] Pray, have you sent any of them as yet to London, or have they been mentioned to Sir Joshua Reynolds?

I have spent my time very pleasantly since I came here, and

[1] The Essays on the *Nature and Principles of Taste*.

have seen a good many extraordinary men, and some still more extraordinary women. But as we are to meet so soon, I shall not at present enter into particulars. De Bonneville[1] is as amiable, as diverting, and as mad as ever. He has been labouring at a history of Modern Europe, and has already *printed* (but not *published*) the first three volumes. I have read only a few pages, which I think are eloquent, but extravagant beyond conception. There is nothing in Raynal half so violent against kings and priests; and he seems to think it the great object which philosophers ought to have in view, "to *un*king and *un*priest" the earth (*deroiser* and *deprétrailler la terre;* two words which are, I believe, of his own invention). By his means I have got acquainted with a lady (Madame la Présidente de Fleurieu), who is, if possible, a greater curiosity than himself. She is the *aimable Mélanie* of whom Rousseau speaks in some of his works. She was married when almost a child, and very soon separated from her husband, who is still alive, and who commonly resides at Lyons.

The pleasantest woman, by far, whom I have seen here, and the most respectable, is Madame de Lessert, the mother of two young gentlemen of that name who studied some years ago at Edinburgh. She, too, was a very intimate friend of Rousseau's, and it was for her daughter that he wrote his introduction to botany; but she is a woman perfectly free from every sort of pretension, and occupied entirely with the education of her children. M. Berquin (the children's friend), to whom I was lately introduced by De Bonneville, and who is, in my opinion, a most delightful creature, told me, that of all the women he ever knew, Madame de Lessert was the best wife and the best mother. M. Guyot, who had the charge of the young men when they were in Scotland, and who is one of their nearest relations, still lives with them, and has been of more use to me than any person I have met with at Paris.

[1] Nicholas de Bonneville, (1760-1828), a journalist and poet of the period; and author of various works, among others, *Histoire de l'Europe Moderne* (1789-1792); and *L'Esprit des Religions* (1791). He was a Girondist, and friend of Lafayette.

I am just returned from a little expedition to the country with Arbuthnot, in the course of which we visited Ermenonville, where I need not inform you that Jean Jacques [1] is buried. I was miserably disappointed to find everything in such disorder, partly in consequence of the negligence of the proprietor, and partly of the winter's floods, which last season occasioned an overflowing of his artificial lakes, and entirely disfigured some of his most beautiful scenes. I must, however, do him the justice to say, that it is the only place I have ever seen in France which can give the foreigner some idea of the English style of gardening, and that he has had the good sense to leave his park, particularly that part of it which he calls the *Desert*, and which, indeed, is very fine, in full possession of its natural advantages.

You will have heard already of the dismission of the *Garde des Sceaux*, an event which has given great joy to the populace here. For some days past they have been testifying their satisfaction by throwing squibs and crackers, and by playing all the other pranks of a London mob. I passed the Pont Neuf this forenoon, where they were assembled in great numbers, and where they forced every passenger to pull off his hat to the statue of Henri IV.

Believe me ever most sincerely yours, D. S

You owe this long letter in part to most agreeable accounts which I have just received of Matthew. God bless you!

IX.—To the Same.

[Edinburgh], 27*th Nov.* 1791.

My dearest Archy,—After congratulating you on your new dignity, allow me to congratulate you on the affairs of France, which are going on more and more every day to my satisfaction. The king's negative to the decree concerning the Emigrants, was, I think, a most judicious measure, and concerted with the best friends to the new constitution; and the

[1] Rousseau.

behaviour of the Assembly and of the people, in consequence of it, has done more than any former occurrence to overwhelm those in this country who were of opinion that the efficiency of the Government was entirely at an end.

The magnitude of the Civil List (which, I am told, is not less than a million and a half sterling), would, indeed, be an enormous evil, and an endless source of corruption, if it were to be continued to the King's successors; but in a country where the manners have been formed under an arbitrary government, and where some time must elapse before the ideas of the people are completely changed, I am not certain if it is not fortunate, on the whole, to secure to the executive power such a weight as may consolidate the different parts of so vast a system, and may preserve the people in that tranquillity which is necessary to enable the new constitution to produce its full effects on their industry and their morals. The pains which some writers in Paris are taking at present for the instruction of the lower orders, are most meritorious, and cannot fail to have the happiest effects. I have seen lately some excellent numbers of a paper entitled, *Feuille Villageoise*, which is written by the Abbé Cerutti, and by Rabot de St. Etienne; and the new Assembly[1] is soon to be occupied with the consideration of the Bishop of Autun's[2] plan of National Instruction. The little disorders which may now and then occur in a country, where things in general are in so good a train, are of very inconsiderable importance.

You would regret, as I did at first, Fayette's disappointment in his competition for the mayoralty; but although I am sorry he should fail in any attempt he engages in, I am disposed to believe that the election of Péthion[3] is a fortunate event for the country. He is a man of most excellent character, both in public and private life, and possesses the unbounded confidence of that part of the Parisian populace from which insurrections are chiefly to be dreaded. I consider, therefore, his election as

[1] The Legislative opened 1st October 1791.

[2] Talleyrand.

[3] Péthion's election was effected chiefly by the support of the Girondists.

a perfect security against all *groundless* tumults; while, on the other hand, it must be an effectual check against any unwarrantable attempts which the Court might make, to have the government of Paris lodged in such hands as those of Péthion and Roederer.

The depreciation of the Assignats still continues, but cannot last long. I saw a gentleman yesterday, who told me that a friend of his had received a letter from one of the most eminent bankers of Paris, in which he recommends it as the best of all possible speculations, for a monied man to purchase Assignats, as he thinks before the end of a year they will be very little under par. Another gentleman told me, that he had seen the proprietor of an estate near Havre, who said that his tenants had already offered him an advance of three shillings per acre, and to charge themselves with the payment of the territorial tax (amounting to one-sixth of the rent).

X.—To the Same.

Lainshaw, 29*th October* 1792.

France goes on well. The *new Assembly*,[1] indeed, has not hitherto made a good figure in the papers; but I have good reason to believe that it consists of men fully equal to their predecessors. The committees were not completely organized by the last accounts I saw, and till they are fairly brought into action, you need not be surprised at any absurdities that the Assembly commits. The members you must consider, at present, as a set of men brought together from different corners of the country, full of mutual jealousy and distrust; and you may believe that those who are afterwards to guide their deliberations, will be the least forward to show themselves till they know their ground. My hopes on the subject are much confirmed by a good deal of private information I have received of late, which I have not leisure to mention to you in detail.

I met with a gentleman a few days ago at Fullarton who had left Rome last February, and who received a letter from it

[1] The National Convention, which met on the 20th September of this year.

a few days ago. By the letter, the accounts of the Pope's illness are confirmed, and it is also mentioned, that the people are talking sanguinely of restoring, upon his death, *their Consuls and their Senate.*

I ever am, my dear ARCHY, most sincerely and affectionately yours, DUGALD STEWART.

XI.—TO THE SAME.

[EDINBURGH,] *Saturday, January* 1793.

MY DEAR ARCHY,—I rejoice at the birth of your son,[1] and still more at the good accounts you give of Mrs. Alison. I don't know what duties your Church imposes on a godfather, but I promise to do all I can to make him a Philosopher and an Economist; and I engage, as soon as he begins to snuff (which, I suppose, he will do in a dozen years hence), to make him the present of a very handsome box which I received lately, with the *Rights of Man* inscribed on the lid.

I am anxious, no less than you, about France, but I hope the best. I saw a letter from Tom Douglas,[2] written from Paris a few weeks ago, in which he seems pleased with the state of things on the whole. The Government very weak, but so very great a proportion of the people anxiously desiring the return of order, that he thinks it cannot fail to be quickly re-established. A slight insurrection would, in his opinion, be rather an advantage, as it would probably be the means of establishing an armed force, which (he says) is all that appears necessary. Burot's motion to that effect, *failed chiefly* on account of its being proposed in an injudicious form. He had seen Condorcet and Roederer, the latter of whom is now the conductor of the *Journal de Paris.* Roederer speaks slightly of all the members of the Convention excepting Condorcet and Sièyes,[3] who, according to him, are the only men in it of first-rate abilities. There are a good many men of second-rate talents and con-

[1] Now Sir A. Alison, Bart.

[2] Afterwards Earl of Selkirk.

[3] The well-known Abbé, author of the memorable pamphlet, *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers Etat?*

siderable eloquence, such as Vergniaud,[1] Guadet, &c. But Condorcet and Sièyes have fortunately got the lead in the constitutional committee, so that, I think, something may be expected from their labours.

I tremble at the thought of war, because it appears to me to be risking the prosperity and the tranquillity of this country on the throw of a die. If we engage in it, it will open a new source of political events, the final issue of which is beyond all calculation; but I think, in general, we may venture to predict, that it will not be agreeable to the wishes of those who are most anxious to promote it. Is it not melancholy that the occurrences of the last twenty years should have taught statesmen so little wisdom? The infatuation of this part of the country is beyond all belief. A few weeks have turned the tide most effectually, and all freedom, both of speech and of the press, is for a time suspended. But things cannot long continue in their present state, and Government will undoubtedly miscalculate its strength if it counts much on newspaper declarations. The late shocking barbarities at Paris, have furnished the means of inflaming popular passions; but if order were established in that country, or if the events of next campaign should be as contrary to the expectations of our politicians as those of the last, I am afraid to look forward to the consequences. I own I am still in hopes that the storm may blow over, and that the mercantile interest of the country may have the sense and spirit to come forward as they ought. The declaration of the Executive Council should, I think, have some effect.[2]

[1] The Deputy for Bordeaux—like Condorcet, a Girondist, and destined to play a conspicuous part in the course of the Revolution.

[2] The communication, of date 4th January 1793, by M. le Brun, Minister for Foreign Affairs, in reply to Lord Grenville, the tone of which was temperate and conciliatory. The correspondence between the two Governments was closed on the 24th of this month by Lord Grenville's Note, dismissing the French Ambassador from the Court of England three days after the execution of the King. Mr. Stewart, it thus appears, unhesitatingly concurred with the minority of Parliament in deprecating the war with France. With the notes on political events given in those letters may be compared *Dissertation*, part iii., *Works*, vol. i. p. 487, *et seq.*, which contains Mr. Stewart's matured reflections on the general issues of the movements here referred to as in progress.

XII.—Mr. Stewart to Francis Horner, Esq.

Newbattle Abbey, *8th June* 1805.

My dear Sir,—The affair of Lord M. [Melville] has, since the date of your letter, assumed a much more serious aspect than it then wore, and I trust that it will terminate in a manner so decisive as to close for ever his political career,—an event which I consider as synonymous with the emancipation and salvation of Scotland. His friends here, in the meantime, although disconcerted and mortified by the late proceedings in the House of Commons,[1] are far from giving up his cause as desperate, and (for what reason I know not) their language has become bolder within the last week. You will probably have already heard that, on the King's birthday, his health was given among other public toasts in the Parliament House; and I have this day learned, that the same compliment was, on the same occasion, paid to him by the Magistrates of Glasgow. How the toast was received *there* I don't know; but at Edinburgh, I was told by a gentleman who was present, that it was drunk with considerable enthusiasm.

May I request of you, while this momentous question remains in suspense, to send me all the information you can collect? I am indeed the worst of all correspondents; but I can, with great truth, assure you, that in proportion to my own want of punctuality in letter-writing, is my gratitude to such of my friends as have the goodness to overlook it.

After speaking of Lord M., whose fall is so interesting to the empire at large, and more particularly to every independent man in this part of the island, I am ashamed to mention the miserable Kirk Politics in which I have lately had the misfor-

[1] The Commons, by the casting-vote of the speaker, had affirmed Mr. Whitbread's resolutions, which embodied a charge of malversation against Lord Melville. This led to his lordship's resignation of his office of First Lord of the Admiralty, and to the erasure of his name from the list of Privy Councillors. He was subsequently, however, acquitted by the Peers of the practices charged by the Commons, and was again admitted a member of the Privy Council.

tune to be involved. And yet, circumstanced as we were, it was absolutely necessary for the friends of liberality and of learning, to submit to a contest with the enemy, and I am not without hopes, that after the victory we have gained, we shall be less *priest-ridden* in our Scotch Universities than we have been during the long period of Lord M.'s administration. That all our College offices should in future be given to clergymen (if clergymen could be found competent to fill them), was a system publicly avowed by some of his nearest relations and most confidential friends, at the time when the professorship of Rhetoric was last vacant.[1] The general, I might almost say the universal sense of the public, seems at present to be decidedly hostile to such an idea.[2]

Believe me always yours most truly, DUGALD STEWART.

XIII.—MR. STEWART TO F. HORNER, ESQ.

Wednesday [*Post-mark*, 12*th Feby.* 1806].

MY DEAR SIR,—I had the pleasure of learning from Debarry[3] the victorious result of the Cambridge election the day before your letter reached me.[4] But the satisfaction which this, and the general aspect of our domestic concerns has given me, is not a little damped by the apprehensions which I have all along felt, that we, on this side of the Tweed, may not be destined to share in the good fortune which seems now to await the other parts of the empire.

The information contained in your letter is not new to me; and I know too well that your statements are not exaggerated.[5]

[1] Mr. Stewart here refers to the appointment of the Rev. Andrew Brown, D.D. (one of the ministers of Edinburgh), to the chair of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, in opposition to another, and, in his opinion, more qualified and eligible candidate—Dr. Thomas Brown, afterwards Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University.

[2] For notice of the Leslie Case, see above, *Memoir*, p. lxxv., *et seq.*

[3] Rev. Mr. Debarry, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.

[4] The return of Lord Henry Petty for the University of Cambridge, over Lord Althorpe, by 331 to 144.

[5] Mr. Horner, in his letter to Mr. Stewart, had referred to the report of an attempt, on the part of certain political leaders in Scotland, to transfer the patronage and administration of the country into the hands of Lord Moira, in room of Lord Melville.

Everything, however, that can be done from this quarter *has been* done already, through the medium of Lord Lauderdale, and no pains have been spared to keep H. Erskine as steady as possible to his old principles. My principal, and indeed my only hope, is founded on the good sense and the justice of the present ministry, who, I trust, after the triumph which they have gained for the country at large, will not deliver us over, with additional mortification and disgrace, into the hands of our old oppressors. The impeachment of Melville renders the whole project so completely extravagant and absurd, that I cannot conceive that it should meet with the slightest countenance from any one individual in the Cabinet, excepting the person by whom it was conceived. Should, however, these hopes be disappointed, my resolution is already formed,—not to enter again, at my time of life, on a new term of servitude, if I should be reduced to the necessity of burying myself in Wales, or of emigrating to America.

I flatter myself you will continue your goodness in writing often till this critical juncture is fairly over.

Mrs. S. begs her kindest remembrances. Yours ever,

D. S.

XIV.—To Sir Samuel Romilly.[1]

Kinneil House, *June* 28, 1810.

My dear Sir,—I have yet to thank you for the very great pleasure I received from your Observations on the Criminal Law of England. On every point which you have there touched upon, your reasonings carried complete conviction to my mind; and however unsuccessful they may have been in accomplishing your object in Parliament, I am satisfied that they must have produced a very strong impression on public opinion. I hope that nothing will discourage you from the prosecution of your arduous undertaking, in which you cannot fail to be seconded by the good wishes of every man of common humanity,

[1] With reference to his pamphlet, *Observations on the Criminal Law as it relates to Capital Punishments, and on the Mode in which it is Administered* (1810):—the recognised source of the changes by which the severity of the English Criminal Law has been since that time mitigated.

whose understanding is not altogether blinded by professional or by political prejudices.

I was more particularly interested in that part of your argument, where you combat Paley, whose apology for the existing system I never could read without feelings of indignation. Indeed, I have more than once lost my temper in discussing the merits of that part of his book with some of your countrymen, who were disposed to look up to him as an oracle, both in politics and in morals. Your reply to him is, in my opinion, quite unanswerable.

I ever am, my dear Sir, most sincerely yours,

DUGALD STEWART.

XV.—MR. STEWART TO DR. CURRIE, AUTHOR OF THE *Life of Burns*, GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF THE POET.[1]

THE first time I saw Robert Burns, was on the 23d of October 1786, when he dined at my house in Ayrshire, together with our common friend, Mr. John Mackenzie, surgeon in Mauchline, to whom I am indebted for the pleasure of his acquaintance. I am enabled to mention the date particularly, by some verses which Burns wrote after his return home, and in which the day of our meeting is recorded. My excellent and much lamented friend, the late Basil, Lord Daer, happened to arrive at Catrine the same day, and by the kindness and frankness of his manners, left an impression on the mind of the poet, which never was effaced. The verses I allude to are among the most imperfect of his pieces; but a few stanzas may perhaps be an object of curiosity to you, both on account of the character to which they relate, and of the light which they throw on the situation and feelings of the writer, before his name was known to the public.[2]

[1] From Currie's *Burns*, vol. i. p. 108, *et seq.*

[2] The poem alluded to commences as follows:—

> This wot ye all whom it concerns,
> I, Rhymer Robin, *alias* Burns, &c.
>
> Currie's *Burns*, vol. i. p. 138.

I cannot positively say, at this distance of time, whether, at the period of our first acquaintance, the Kilmarnock edition of his poems had been just published, or was yet in the press. I suspect that the latter was the case, as I have still in my possession copies, in his own handwriting, of some of his favourite performances; particularly of his verses *On Turning up a Mouse with his Plough*, *On the Mountain Daisy*, and *The Lament*. On my return to Edinburgh, I showed the volume, and mentioned what I knew of the author's history, to several of my friends, and among others, to Mr. Henry Mackenzie, who first recommended him to public notice in the 97th number of *The Lounger*.

At this time, Burns' prospects in life were so extremely gloomy, that he had seriously formed a plan of going out to Jamaica in a very humble situation; not, however, without lamenting, that his want of patronage should force him to think of a project so repugnant to his feelings, when his ambition aimed at no higher an object than the station of an exciseman, or gauger, in his own country.

His manners were then, as they continued ever afterwards, simple, manly, and independent, strongly expressive of conscious genius and worth, but without anything that indicated forwardness, arrogance, or vanity. He took his share in conversation, but not more than belonged to him, and listened, with apparent attention and deference, on subjects where his want of education deprived him of the means of information. If there had been a little more of gentleness and accommodation in his temper, he would, I think, have been still more interesting; but he had been accustomed to give law in the circle of his ordinary acquaintance, and his dread of anything approaching to meanness or servility rendered his manner somewhat decided and hard. Nothing, perhaps, was more remarkable among his various attainments, than the fluency and precision and originality of his language when he spoke in company; more particularly as he aimed at purity in his turn of expression, and avoided, more successfully than most Scotchmen, the peculiarities of Scottish phraseology.

He came to Edinburgh early in the winter following, and remained there for several months. By whose advice he took this step, I am unable to say. Perhaps it was suggested only by his own curiosity to see a little more of the world; but, I confess, I dreaded the consequences from the first, and always wished that his pursuits and habits should continue the same as in the former part of life, with the addition of, what I considered as then completely within his reach, a good farm on moderate terms, in a part of the country agreeable to his taste.

The attentions he received during his stay in town, from all ranks and descriptions of persons, were such as would have turned any head but his own. I cannot say that I could perceive any unfavourable effect which they left on his mind. He retained the same simplicity of manners and appearance which had struck me so forcibly when I first saw him in the country; nor did he seem to feel any additional self-importance from the number and rank of his new acquaintance. His dress was perfectly suited to his station, plain and unpretending, with a sufficient attention to neatness. If I recollect right, he always wore boots, and, when on more than usual ceremony, buckskin breeches.

The variety of his engagements while in Edinburgh, prevented me from seeing him so often as I could have wished. In the course of the spring, he called on me once or twice, at my request, early in the morning, and walked with me to Braid Hills, in the neighbourhood of the town, when he charmed me still more by his private conversation than he had ever done in company. He was passionately fond of the beauties of nature; and I recollect once he told me, when I was admiring a distant prospect in one of our morning walks, that the sight of so many smoking cottages gave a pleasure to his mind, which none could understand who had not witnessed, like himself, the happiness and the worth which they contained.

In his political principles he was then a Jacobite, which was, perhaps, owing partly to this, that his father was originally from the estate of Lord Mareschall. Indeed, he did not appear

to have thought much on such subjects, nor very consistently. He had a very strong sense of religion, and expressed deep regret at the levity with which he had heard it treated occasionally, in some convivial meetings which he frequented. I speak of him as he was in the winter of 1786-87; for afterwards we met but seldom, and our conversations turned chiefly on his literary projects, or his private affairs.

I do not recollect whether it appears or not, from any of your letters to me, that you had ever seen Burns. If you have, it is superfluous for me to add, that the idea which his conversation conveyed of the powers of his mind, exceeded, if possible, that which is suggested by his writings. Among the poets whom I have happened to know, I have been struck, in more than one instance, with the unaccountable disparity between their general talents, and the occasional inspirations of their more favoured moments. But all the faculties of Burns' mind were, as far as I could judge, equally vigorous; and his predilection for poetry, was rather the result of his own enthusiastic and impassioned temper, than of a genius exclusively adapted to that species of composition. From his conversation, I should have pronounced him to be fitted to excel in whatever walk of ambition he had chosen to exert his abilities.

Among the subjects on which he was accustomed to dwell, the characters of the individuals with whom he happened to meet, was plainly a favourite one. The remarks he made on them were always shrewd and pointed; though frequently inclining too much to sarcasm. His praise of those he loved was sometimes indiscriminate and extravagant; but this, I suspect, proceeded rather from the caprice and humour of the moment, than from the effects of attachment in blinding his judgment. His wit was ready, and always impressed with the marks of a vigorous understanding, but, to my taste, not often pleasing or happy. His attempts at epigram, in his printed works, are the only performances, perhaps, that he has produced totally unworthy of his genius.

In summer 1787, I passed some weeks in Ayrshire, and saw Burns occasionally. I think that he made a pretty long excur-

sion that season to the Highlands, and that he also visited what Beattie calls the Arcadian ground of Scotland, upon the banks of the Teviot and the Tweed.

I should have mentioned before, that notwithstanding various reports I heard during the preceding winter, of Burns' predilection for convivial, and not very select society, I should have concluded in favour of his habits of sobriety, from all of him that ever fell under my own observation. He told me, indeed, himself, that the weakness of his stomach was such as to deprive him entirely of any merit in his temperance. I was, however, somewhat alarmed about the effect of his now comparatively sedentary and luxurious life, when he confessed to me, the first night he spent in my house after his winter's campaign in town, that he had been much disturbed when in bed by a palpitation at his heart, which, he said, was a complaint to which he had of late become subject.

In the course of the same season, I was led by curiosity to attend for an hour or two a mason lodge in Mauchline, where Burns presided. He had occasion to make some short unpremeditated compliments to different individuals, from whom he had no reason to expect a visit, and everything he said was happily conceived, and forcibly as well as fluently expressed. If I am not mistaken, he told me, that in that village, before going to Edinburgh, he had belonged to a small club of such of the inhabitants as had a taste for books, when they used to converse and debate on any interesting questions that occurred to them in the course of their reading. His manner of speaking in public had evidently the marks of some practice in extempore elocution.

I must not omit to mention, what I have always considered as characteristical, in a high degree, of true genius, the extreme facility and good nature of his taste in judging of the compositions of others, where there was any real ground for praise. I repeated to him many passages of English poetry, with which he was unacquainted, and have more than once witnessed the tears of admiration and rapture with which he heard them. The collection of songs by Dr. Aiken, which I first put into his hands, he read with unmixed delight, notwithstanding his for-

mer efforts in that very difficult species of writing; and I have little doubt that it had some effect in polishing his subsequent compositions.

In judging of prose, I do not think his taste was equally sound. I once read to him a passage or two in Franklin's works, which I thought very happily executed upon the model of Addison, but he did not appear to relish, or to perceive the beauty which they derived from their exquisite simplicity, and spoke of them with indifference, when compared with the point, and antithesis, and quaintness of *Junius*. The influence of this taste is very perceptible in his own prose compositions, although their great and various excellencies render some of them scarcely less objects of wonder than his poetical performances. The late Dr. Robertson used to say, that, considering his education, the former seemed to him the more extraordinary of the two.

His memory was uncommonly retentive, at least for poetry, of which he recited to me frequently long compositions with the most minute accuracy. They were chiefly ballads, and other pieces in our Scottish dialect; great part of them (he told me) he had learned in his childhood, from his mother, who delighted in such recitations, and whose poetical taste, rude as it probably was, gave, it is presumable, the first direction to her son's genius.

Of the more polished verses which accidentally fell into his hands in his early years, he mentioned particularly the recommendatory poems by different authors, prefixed to Hervey's *Meditations*,—a book which has always had a very wide circulation among such of the country people of Scotland as affect to unite some degree of taste with their religious studies. And these poems (although they are certainly below mediocrity) he continued to read with a degree of rapture beyond expression. He took notice of this fact himself, as a proof how much the taste is liable to be influenced by accidental circumstances.

His father appeared to me, from the account he gave of him, to have been a respectable and worthy character, possessed of a mind superior to what might have been expected from his

station in life. He ascribed much of his own principles and feelings to the early impressions he had received from his instructions and example. I recollect that he once applied to *him* (and he added, that the passage was a literal statement of fact), the two last lines of the following passage in the *Minstrel*, the whole of which he repeated with great enthusiasm :—

"Shall I be left forgotten in the dust,
When fate, relenting, lets the flower revive,
Shall Nature's voice, to man alone unjust,
Bid him, though doom'd to perish, hope to live?

"Is it for this fair virtue oft must strive,
With disappointment, penury and pain?
No: heaven's immortal spring shall yet arrive,
And man's majestic beauty bloom again,
Bright through th' eternal year of love's triumphant reign.
This truth sublime his simple sire had taught;
In sooth 'twas almost all the shepherd knew."

With respect to Burns' early education, I cannot say any thing with certainty. He always spoke with respect and gratitude of the schoolmaster who had taught him to read English, and who, finding in his scholar a more than ordinary ardour for knowledge, had been at pains to instruct him in the grammatical principles of the language. He began the study of Latin, but dropped it before he had finished the verbs. I have sometimes heard him quote a few Latin words, such as *omnia vincit amor*, &c.; but they seemed to be such as he had caught from conversation, and which he repeated by *rote*. I think he had a project, after he came to Edinburgh, of prosecuting the study under his intimate friend, the late Mr. Nicol, one of the masters of the grammar-school here; but I do not know if he ever proceeded so far as to make the attempt.

He certainly possessed a smattering of French, and, if he had an affectation in anything, it was in introducing occasionally a word or phrase from that language. It is possible that his knowledge, in this respect, might be more extensive than I suppose it to be; but this you can learn from his more intimate acquaintance. It would be worth while to inquire whether he was able to read the French authors with such

facility as to receive from them any improvement to his taste. For my own part, I doubt it much, nor would I believe it, but on very strong and pointed evidence.

If my memory does not fail me, he was well instructed in arithmetic, and knew something of practical geometry, particularly of surveying. All his other attainments were entirely his own.

The last time I saw him was during the winter 1788-89,[1] when he passed an evening with me at Drumsheugh, in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, where I was then living. My friend, Mr. Alison, was the only other person in company. I never saw him more agreeable or interesting. A present which Mr. Alison sent him afterwards of his *Essays on Taste*, drew from Burns a letter of acknowledgment, which I remember to have read with some degree of surprise, at the distinct conception he appeared from it to have formed, of the general principles of the doctrine of *association*.

[1] Or rather 1789-90. I cannot speak with confidence with respect to the particular year. Some of my other dates may possibly require correction, as I keep no journal of such occurrences.

APPENDIX B.

LETTERS TO MR. STEWART.

I.—Dr. Reid to Mr. Stewart.

Greenhead of Glasgow, *January* 21, 1793.

Dear Sir,—This will be delivered to you by a nephew of mine, George Rose, a student of medicine at your College, whom I wish to introduce to you for his benefit. Dr. Gregory gives him a good character.

I did not see you when you returned from the country, so my observations on your book[1] must sleep till I have that pleasure, if I live so long.

I return with this Wells' book on *Vision*, which has much learning on the subject, and therefore may be very fit to answer the purpose of one who sets up as a physician in London; but I do not see that it makes any addition to human knowledge. I take also the liberty to send you a medallion of an old wrinkled face, which must soon be laid in the dust, but wishes to be remembered by you.[2]

Have you read a *Vindication of the Rights of Women?* I think a Professor of Morals may find some things worthy of his attention, mixed, perhaps, with other things which he may not approve. My best respects to Mrs. Stewart.—I am, dear Sir, yours affectionately, Tho. Reid.

[1] The first volume of the *Elements*.

[2] Dr. Reid had now reached the venerable age of eighty-two.

II.—Robert Burns to Mr. Stewart.

Ellisland, 30*th July* 1790.

Sir,—It would be a reason sufficiently just if I were to tell you that I have not sent my Poetic Epistle to Fintry, because I actually could not find time to transcribe it; but a better reason is, I am out of conceit with it myself, and transcribing a thing of my own I do not like, is a drudgery I know not how to bear. I daresay, if you have not met with Captain Matthew Henderson about Edinburgh, you must have heard of him. He was an intimate acquaintance of mine; and of all mankind I ever knew, he was one of the first for a nice sense of honour, and generous contempt of the adventitious distinctions of men, and sterling, though sometimes *outré*, wit. The enclosed elegy has pleased me beyond any of my late poetic efforts. Perhaps 'tis "the memory of joys that are past," and a friend who is no more, that biases my criticism. It is likewise, ever since I read your Aiken on the poetical use of Natural History, a favourite study of mine, the characters of the Vegetable, and the manners of the Animal kingdoms. I regret much that I cannot have an opportunity of waiting on you, to have your strictures on this poem, how I have succeeded on the whole, if there is any incongruity in the imagery, or whether I have not omitted some apt rural paintings altogether. I will not pretend to say, whether it is owing to my prejudice in favour of a gentleman to whom I am so much indebted, or to your critical abilities; but in the way of my trade as a Poet, I will subscribe more implicitly to *your* strictures than to any individual on earth.

I have written Captain Grose, and enclosed him a billet to you. If he comes to your neighbourhood, you will probably see him.

I shall have leisure soon to write off for you several of my pieces.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obliged humble servant,

Robt. Burns.[1]

[1] See Currie's *Burns*, vol. ii. p. 92, and p. 131, for additional letters of Burns to Mr. Stewart.

III.—Uvedale Price, Esq.,[1] to Mr. Stewart.

Sunning Hill, *June* 9, 1808.

When I wrote to thank Lord Webb Seymour for his excellent advice, with respect to the arrangement of what I had written, as well as for his other criticisms in detail, I requested him to return you my best thanks for the observations you had the kindness to send me. I must now beg leave to thank you in my own person, and in excuse for the liberty I take in writing to you, must plead the flattering wish you have expressed to know my opinion of a particular part of your work on the Philosophy of the Human Mind. When I first read the remarks you were so good as to communicate, I was very much struck with the new lights which they threw on many parts of the subject; but in the hurry of London, I had not leisure to consider them minutely, and since my return into the country I have been far from well; I have lately, however, read them more than once very attentively, and am conscious of their justness throughout; not less of such as point out some of Mr. Burke's inaccuracies, which I must own had in part escaped me, than of those which support and illustrate his theory and my comments. One or two distinctions, which, notwithstanding my general acquiescence, have occurred to me, I will venture to set down.

The correction you have proposed with regard to the effect of astonishment in producing a sublime emotion in the person himself, seems to me not only just, but extremely material. When all the motions of the soul are suspended, as in cases of extreme terror, though in description the whole scene may be highly sublime, yet the person himself cannot at the time be sensible of any sublimity: whereas the suspension of the reasoning faculties, as you well observe, strengthens the illusions of the imagination. Perhaps, however, if the word 'astonishment' be taken according to its strict meaning and etymology,

[1] Mr. Price was the author of the *Essay on the Picturesque*, which is chiefly an expansion and illustration of the doctrines of Burke. He is referred to by Mr. Stewart in the *Philosophical Essays*, *Works*, vol. v. p. 221, *et seq.*

there may be a momentary suspension, not only of the reasoning, but of all the faculties; if, for example, at the instant when the crash of thunder was heard, and the lightning seen, a magazine of powder was set on fire by it and blown up, such must be the astonishment, that all the motions of the soul (unless of a very uncommon one) would for the moment "be suspended with some degree of horror;" but the sublimity could not well be felt, till that moment of suspension was past, and the motions of the soul, though not the reasoning faculties, were restored.

By annexing an adventitious idea of terror to things of great dimension, Mr. Burke certainly appears to make such greatness the ruling principle, and terror the accessory, and so far to depart from his general theory; although he has in some measure guarded against that supposition, by saying, that in consequence of such an addition they become *without comparison*, greater. The appearance of such a departure from his theory ought to have been avoided; but I am inclined to think that it is more apparent than real. There seem to be cases where terror, though it might justly be termed an accessory, would in reality be principal. Ætna, for example, is possessed of great grandeur merely from its size, standing as it does, alone, and detached from all other mountains; but the fiery eruption, though only occasional and accessory, has without comparison the strongest effect on the imagination. The instance of Ætna exactly answers to what is stated by Mr. Burke; it is one where an adventitious idea of terror is annexed to greatness of dimension, but where although adventitious it becomes principal.

It gives me great satisfaction to find that you agree with me in thinking, that the terrible is a source of the sublime, specifically different from the rest, and that on some occasions, and perhaps (though you there speak doubtingly) on *most*, the terrible is the ruling principle in producing a sublime effect; grandeur, power, &c., performing merely the office of auxiliaries. It would be unreasonable not to allow grandeur, power, &c., to act the principal part in their turn on other occasions. I do

allow it, only suggesting, or rather proposing as a matter of inquiry, whether grandeur, power, loftiness, &c., though frequently unaccompanied by terror, are not in all, or almost all cases attended with awe; and whether any objects are sublime that are not awful. I, of course, consider terror and awe, though both are modifications of fear, as extremely distinct in their character.

"Vultu quo cœlum tempestatesque serenat,"

may be given as an instance of power and grandeur totally free from terror, though not from awe; and the description of Alecto, as one of the sublime effect of terror without grandeur, and where power is subordinate. If then it should be true, that when grandeur, power, &c., are sublime without being terrible, they must still be so by means of awe; and that nothing is sublime which does not inspire emotions either of terror or of awe, perhaps it may be a subject of inquiry whether these two modifications of fear should not be considered as the two ruling principles of the sublime.

I will now mention what has occurred to me with regard to the particular point, on which you have done me the honour of asking my opinion, namely, whether the moral question concerning the momentary belief, which you think accompanies all the exertions of imagination, strikes me as it does you. I fear I am not only an inadequate, but a prejudiced judge, as in what I have written on the subject, I strongly lean to your opinion; as, however, you have condescended to ask me for mine, I shall give it with frankness according to the present impression. I can have no doubt that Dr. Reid goes infinitely too far in asserting that imagination is attended with no kind of belief at all, and, of course, not even with a momentary belief or illusion. All your reasoning on the subject, and almost all the instances you have given, and among them, those from Dr. Reid himself, appear to me quite decisive. As far, however, as I have been able to consider the question, I should conceive that as such a momentary or short belief must depend on the degree to which the imagination is affected, there must be a degree

below which it can hardly be said to exist. The only instance, therefore, which does not quite satisfy me, is that of the painter who conceives the face and the figure of an absent friend, *in order to draw his picture;* because in such a case, though the imagination must be affected to conceive them at all, it perhaps is not sufficiently so as to produce illusion even for a moment. The voluntary act of calling to mind the features of an absent friend, which the expression of "in order to draw them" seems to imply, would, I am apt to conceive, be less likely to create illusion, from its being voluntary; and no illusion, as in dramatic representation, would be excited and kept up during the process. In cases of ardent friendship, under affecting circumstances, and still more in those of a stronger passion, there can be little doubt that the image of a friend or a mistress may be so strongly impressed on the imagination, as to induce a momentary belief that the person is really present. A painter, under similar circumstances, is more likely to conceive and to retain the features and figure of an absent person than another man; and it possibly might be thought that in the enthusiasm of his passion, he might continue to think the beloved object present while he was rapidly tracing her image on the paper or canvas. Perhaps, however, even that is going further than can well be allowed; for the operation of the hand, however ready and obedient to the will, would be apt to break the charm of so frail and baseless a fabric as that of illusion.

I have the honour to be, with great regard, your most faithful, humble servant, UVEDALE PRICE.

IV.—ANONYMOUS LETTER TO MR. STEWART.[1]

25th June 1815.

SIR,—About the year 1807 or 1808, Agnes Drummond, a poor girl, eleven years of age, was taken by a farmer in the

[1] This and the following letter refer to an interesting case of what has been termed *Double-Consciousness*. This case seems to be noticed, among others, by Dr. Abercrombie, in his *Intellectual Powers*, in the chapter on *Somnambulism and Double Consciousness* (Part III. sect. iv. § ii. chap. ii. pp. 296-300, 3d Edit.) The

neighbourhood of Stirling to herd cows. In consequence, it was supposed, of having fallen asleep on damp ground, she was seized with fever, accompanied by a violent pain in one knee, which ended in a suppuration extending from the hip-joint to the shin, and opened at the knee. After extreme suffering, the sore threw off some splinters of bone, and then healed up. She was taken by a benevolent family in the neighbourhood, who nursed her with the greatest care; and, after a considerable time, succeeded in restoring her to comparative health; although she still had frequent returns of very violent pain, in different parts of her body, and small pieces of bone have at different times been thrown off. During her stay at the farmer's, a dancing-master, who occasionally lodges there, amused himself in the evenings, generally after she was in bed, by playing on the fiddle. But although he played, besides dancing music, many long pieces, it was not remarked that she took any particular notice of them, and, indeed, for the most part she was fast asleep. After she had been for some years at her new quarters, singing was sometimes heard in the night, and the young people of the family, after various conjectures, discovered it was this girl. But as she constantly denied it, and was not heard to sing through the day, the voice was at last watched, and it was found that she only sung while in the deepest sleep. She began in a low, suppressed voice, as if humming to herself, then

account given in the text, possesses the advantage of being by an eye-witness, and may be relied on as quite authentic. Mr. Stewart's anxiety to have the facts, in a case so remarkable, fairly and satisfactorily ascertained, is shown by the trouble which he imposed in connexion with it on his venerable friend, the Rev. Sir Henry Moncreiff, at a time when he was prevented by the first threatenings of his own ultimately fatal disease, from making the inquiries in person.

After giving an account of this case, Dr. Abercrombie adds, with reference to the subject of the phænomena: "About the age of twenty-one, she became immoral in her conduct, and was dismissed from the family. Her propensity to talk in her sleep continued to the time of her dismissal, but a great change had taken place in her nocturnal conversation. It had gradually lost its acuteness and brilliancy. . . . It is believed that she afterwards became insane." I regret that, up to the time of going to press, I have been unsuccessful in the attempt to obtain fuller and more precise information regarding the history of this person, after she left the family at Murrayshall. Nothing, however, in her subsequent conduct can be fairly regarded as invalidating the case as given in the text.

twanged, like one trying the strings of a fiddle, trilled through a few voluntaries, and having made some preliminary observations on the merits and beauties of particular tunes,—would begin at the first note of some long and elaborate piece of music, and follow it through all its doublings and windings, to the very last chord without the omission of a single demi-semiquaver. She frequently sung, and generally preceded and concluded the song with a very rational criticism both on the music and words.

This attracted attention, and whenever she was heard beginning to sing, her bed was surrounded by auditors. After a little time, it was observed that each fit of singing was the prelude to a fit of illness; in less than twenty-four hours, she generally had an attack of fever, and violent pain in some part of her body. About eighteen months ago it was remarked that, besides her occasional critique on her songs, she frequently digressed into other topics, and the acuteness of her observations, and the astonishing stores of ideas she displayed, excited the utmost wonder and admiration. She is a quiet, bashful girl, whose voice, when awake, is scarcely ever heard. Her articulation is indistinct, and it has been remarked that she is stupid in going errands, and seldom delivers an intelligible message. Her face, though comely, and expressive of mildness and modesty, has no mark of superior intelligence. Besides household work, she has been taught sewing and reading and writing by the ladies of the family, and was by no means an apt scholar. Indeed, it has been almost impossible to teach her to read; and although much more pains have been bestowed on her in this respect than generally falls to the lot of girls in her station, there is no servant in the house but reads better. During the last twelve months, speaking has nearly superseded her nightly music. She generally seems to suppose herself talking to a companion, whose capacity and means of information, she deems far inferior to her own, as appears from the style in which this poor person is frequently addressed, and her fancied questions or remarks retorted. With this girl she discusses every imaginable subject—politics,

battles, governments, religions, but especially characters, frequently those of the family or their visitors. Bonaparte, Blucher, Wellington, besides multitudes of others, are very often the subjects of her animadversions; and it is worthy of notice that so far from her opinions, like her music, being the echo of what, it may be imagined, she has heard in the family, they are often, especially in politics, in direct opposition. The truth and the justness of her remarks on all subjects, cannot but excite astonishment, when her very limited means of information and acquiring ideas are considered. She speaks in a clear, loud voice, with a perfectly distinct articulation, and language flows upon her with a rapidity perfectly suited to the rapid flow of her ideas. She seldom has to pause for a word, and generally uses the most appropriate and expressive, especially in ludicrous description. She is sometimes bitterly sarcastic, often playfully ironical, and displays great powers of mimicry. Although she speaks with the broad Stirlingshire accent, she can, in an instant, divest herself of it, and adopt that of the person whose words and manner she has under review. She frequently throws herself into violent fits of laughing with her own remarks; and when those who are listening to her laugh, which is very often the case, she laughs louder, tossing about, and speaking faster than ever. She by no means wanders from subject to subject in an unconnected manner; each that she mentions is in general more fully discussed than happens in common conversation even among intelligent people. For the most part it is easy to trace the connecting word or idea which introduces the next subject to her mind, and often what she says seems the reply to some supposed observation or question of her much-despised companion, whose imaginary ignorance and simplicity she treats most cavalierly. It is difficult to make her pause, but by repeating her name rapidly several times, it seems to attract her attention, she hesitates for a moment, and listens, and if a question is then asked, although she does not answer, but immediately runs on as before, yet generally, in the course of a little while, she verges towards the subject of the question as if

it had faintly excited a train of thought. It is difficult to awake her while in these fits; and it is also needless. When she is awaked by pulling her out of bed, and giving her something to eat or drink, she has not the least consciousness of what she has been saying, and not the slightest trace of a dream remains in her recollection; and when she falls asleep again immediately begins to sing or speak as before. The writer of this letter has heard her sometimes sing, and sometimes speak for hours without a pause. She seems at last to be overcome by fatigue; her voice grows feeble, and she sinks into heavy, profound sleep, from which it is not easy to arouse her at the usual hour of rising. She then looks pale and exhausted, complaining of a sense of weariness and want of refreshment from sleep, being utterly unconscious of the manner in which she has passed the night; and the instant she is awake, is once more the bashful, noiseless girl, who seems neither to see nor to hear anything but what is directly addressed to herself. It is certain that, in her sleep, she has sometimes related circumstances which never did occur, but this is comparatively seldom; and amidst all the playful vagaries with which she sometimes mingles her conversation, no one has ever heard her utter anything irrational, or like the wanderings of a dream. It is much to her honour, that she has never been known to use a single word or expression that it was painful to hear. Gratitude to her benefactresses, and the innocent effusions of a young, joyous mind, are listened to with pleasure, and though she is always acute, and sometimes sarcastic, there is so much truth and such a mixture of drollery in what she says, that the most morose are forced to smile and admire. She frequently illustrates her various subjects with a fable, which is composed at the moment, or is some slight incident that has occurred in the family, and which she relates in a fanciful manner, and then draws her moral, if not already evident from her preceding discourse. She has been heard lamenting to her imaginary companion, and it seems her only sorrow, her misfortune in [speaking] during her sleep, while the ladies of the family are round her bed. She expresses the most innocent and natural shame at

this circumstance, and asks what would become of her if she had any secrets! She has sometimes used Latin words, it is supposed those she has heard the boys of the family repeat at their lessons. She also told one night of having seen a foreign gentleman in a shop in Stirling, and distinctly repeated a French sentence which she said he made use of. She had never seen a picture in her life till a few years ago, when a copy from Guido was shown to her for a few moments. *A year afterwards* she entered on the subject in her sleep, describing it, and making remarks which many who pretend to be critics would be the better of having heard. Her eyes are always shut, but she tosses about so much, that no person at first sight would suppose her asleep. She sometimes has a fit of speaking twice or thrice in a week, at others, a fortnight or three weeks elapse in silence. Of late she sings very little, and her paroxysms of nocturnal eloquence are not as formerly followed by illness. So that it may be a matter of doubt whether impending illness produced that kind of excitement, whatever it is, which occasioned her singing and speaking, or whether the exhaustion and agitation of these occasioned the following illnesses, until longer practice and more strength enabled her constitution to endure the fatigue without injury. She is tall of her age, and is a large-made, healthy-looking girl, though she lately spat blood, and is liable to other violent complaints.

To Dugald Stewart, Esq., Edinburgh.

If Mr. Stewart has any doubt of the correctness of the above statement, by application to "Miss Wilson, Murrayshall, by Stirling," he will obtain the fullest confirmation, and satisfactory answers to every inquiry he may think proper to make.

Though she occasionally dreams, and remembers her dreams, in no instance has she had the slightest trace of a recollection of dreaming anything connected with what appeared so fully to occupy her mind in sleep. One of the young people, one day while she was in the room, played a tune which she had sung very much during the preceding night, and asked her if she knew it. She at first said no, but afterwards recollected it,

and said, she believed she had heard the dancing-master play it long ago, when she was at her old master's.

V.—The Rev. Sir H. Moncreiff Wellwood to Mrs. Stewart.

Tulliebole, 22*d Sept.* 1815.

My dear Mrs. Stewart,—We have looked in vain for Miss Stewart, from one week to another, till we begin to fear that the good weather is deserting us, and that she is almost giving us up for the season. We lay all the blame on her father, to whom we have only to say, that if he means to relinquish the leading-strings in the course of the autumn, he has now no time to lose.

Meanwhile, I have to inform you, that I have completely executed his commission at Murrayshall. I went there on Monday last, and had a very full conversation with the Miss Wilsons. They are respectable women, (about the age of sixty)—cousins, *perhaps*, cousins-german, of the late Mr. Murray of Polmaise, on whose estate they rent a farm, the profits of which, along with £100 a year, make up their whole revenue. They are three in number; but they have several nieces, whom they have educated, some of whom are respectably married; and three of these (women of twenty or upwards) I saw in the room. They have had nephews, also, I believe, and perhaps other young men, educated in their family, and have the reputation of the most useful and respectable persons in the country. Even their Episcopal (and what was originally Jacobitical) bigotry seems to do them no harm.

I expounded my commission in plain English, and held in my hand the anonymous letter to Mr. Stewart. They showed no curiosity to read the letter, because I think they, or at least some of them, were aware of its contents. I gave it, however, into the hands of one of the sisters, who just looked at the handwriting, and instantly returned it in a way which showed that she did not wish it to be seen by any other person in the room; for besides the Miss Wilsons, there were (in-

cluding the nieces) six other ladies present. As soon as the handwriting was seen, the sister who received the letter assured me, that I might depend on the truth of everything contained in it; and I then heard a distinct and minute history of the young woman, in which every circumstance was authenticated which the letter contains. There was not much added. The music which she had heard from the dancing-master, which she began to repeat at a considerable distance of time in her sleep, had not been merely played in the evening after she had gone to bed, but at a very late hour in the night. This was one slight addition. When she is managing a conversation in her sleep, and gives (as the letter says) the part of her antagonist, as well as her own—if the antagonist is supposed to be better educated than herself, she uses broad Scotch in her own person, but in the person of the other expresses herself much better. There is a man in the neighbourhood who has adopted Unitarian opinions, which she dislikes extremely. She argues often with him, and brings out opinions and arguments with great acuteness, which were never heard from her when she is awake. Indeed, when awake, she has never been heard to utter any opinion, or attempt any argument whatever. Though she sings like other servant-maids while engaged in her ordinary occupations, her singing while awake has scarcely any resemblance to the music she performs when asleep. A few nights ago, while asleep, she began a description of a language, with which she seemed greatly delighted. "I know not," she said, "what the language is. It is perhaps Italian—though I don't know if it is; but it is the softest and pleasantest language I have ever heard. There is no harshness in the sound. It seems all to be vowel, vowel, vowel. I have often heard Latin, but that is all a very harsh language." There were young people taught Latin in the house, and perhaps Italian, (though I do not recollect distinctly if this circumstance was mentioned). But nothing of this kind has been done very lately, and if this was the effect of recollection, it could not at least be recent. Though her nocturnal exhibitions do not occur every night, they are very frequent, most commonly once or

twice in the week. On Sunday night, in particular, they may be almost always expected. Last Sunday night, the night immediately preceding my visit, she had conversed a great deal. I do not recollect if she had sung. Several of the ladies whom I saw, had watched that night, and they mentioned several subjects which she had discussed. A married lady whom I saw there, whose husband is an officer at present in France, was one of the listeners, and on this occasion they attempted what had not been tried before—they spoke to her, and put a question, which she answered as distinctly, and with much less reserve than she would have done awake—"What do you think of Mrs. ——— ?" "I think she is not very pretty; but yet she has something engaging about her. If she should go to France, however, to her husband, I think she had best put on a veil." They are resolved, however, never to put questions again, which they think an unfair advantage of a very innocent creature. She is often heard to regret in her sleep that she has the misfortune to talk and sing in that situation; and on such occasions adds, that she *should* have no secrets. She has no recollection next morning of anything that has passed; and frequently is exhausted and fatigued in the morning, and complains that her sleep does not refresh her as the sleep of other people.

I think I have given you the substance of what I heard. The young woman came into the room by accident, and I had a full view of her. She is between sixteen and seventeen, of rather a large and full habit, with every appearance of health. Her countenance expresses no unusual intelligence, but perhaps softness and good nature. She passed, however, before me so rapidly, that I could not judge very correctly, for the Miss Wilsons are so delicate, that she is never produced with design to anybody. She sometimes speculates on politics, as well as on other subjects. At the age of ten, she lived in a family where Bonaparte was a favourite, and one night *lately*, said, "He has done some evil surely; but he is now brought too low, and it was quite wrong to send him by force to St. Helena; but, after all, he might have done some mischief in

England if he had been kept there, and had he attempted to dethrone our old George, that would have been a great pity!" All her impressions on this subject, which she retains, are evidently the result of her early associations before the age of ten. She attends Gleig's meeting with the Miss Wilsons, who have given her all the instruction they can in religion; but in spite of all they have done, and contrary to all the symptoms of intellect which appear in her sleep, she still reads very imperfectly, worse than the greater number of servants at her age. When I left Miss Wilsons', they requested me to say, that if Mr. Stewart had any wish to hear this young woman's nocturnal lucubrations, it would give them great pleasure, if he would come and spend a night there. A Sunday night would be the best. I discovered his correspondent to be a lady.—Ever yours,

H. Moncreiff Wellwood.

APPENDIX C.

I.—VERSES BY MRS. STEWART.

THE following stanzas from the pen of Mrs. Stewart are to be found in Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*, vol. iv. Edin. 1792. In the new edition of the *Museum* (Edinburgh, 1839) there occurs the following note relative to the verses:—"In the Index to the *Museum*, 'this song of genius,' as Burns calls it, is assigned to 'Miss C * * *n' (Cranstoun), and has been correctly attributed to MRS. DUGALD STEWART, with the exception of the first four lines of the last stanza, which were supplied by Burns to suit the music."

The tears I shed must ever fall,
I mourn not for an absent swain,
For thought may past delights recall,
And parted lovers meet again.
I weep not for the silent dead,
Their toils are past, their sorrows o'er,
And those they loved their steps shall tread,
And death shall join to part no more.

Tho' boundless oceans roll'd between,
If certain that his heart is near,
A conscious transport glads each scene,
Soft is the sigh, and sweet the tear.
Even when by death's cold hand removed,
We mourn the tenant of the tomb;
To think that even in death he loved,
Can gild the horrors of the gloom.

But bitter, bitter are the tears
Of her who slighted love bewails;
No hope her dreary prospect cheers,
No pleasing melancholy hails.
Hers are the pangs of wounded pride,
Of blasted hope, of wither'd joy:
The prop she lean'd on pierced her side,
The flame she fed, burns to destroy.

Even conscious virtue cannot cure
The pangs to every feeling due;
Ungenerous youth! thy boast how poor,
To steal a heart, and break it too!
In vain does memory renew
The hours once tinged in transport's dye;
The sad reverse soon starts to view,
And turns the thought to agony.

[No cold approach, no alter'd mein,
Just what would make suspicion start;
No pause the dire extremes between,
He made me blest—and broke my heart!]
From hope, the wretched's anchor, torn,
Neglected, and neglecting all,
Friendless, forsaken, and forlorn,
The tears I shed must ever fall.

II.—MR. STEWART'S COLOUR-BLINDNESS.

I may here notice, that Mr. Stewart, as well as others of his family, was the subject of partial colour-blindness. The following statement on this point may be relied on as authentic:—"Mr. Stewart had the remarkable peculiarity of vision which made him insensible to the less refrangible colours of the spectrum. This affection of the eye was long unknown, both to himself and his friends, and was discovered from the accidental circumstance of one of his family directing his attention to the beauty of the fruit of the Siberian crab, when he found himself unable to distinguish the scarlet fruit from the green leaves of the tree."—Brewster's *Edinburgh Encyclopædia.*

Dr. Alison also writes:—"I have seen Mr. Stewart look at a scarlet geranium in full flower, and say that he was not sensible of difference of the colours of leaf and flower."

III.—THE FORMAL METHOD OF ONTOLOGY.

The following general account of the character and province of the Formal Laws of thinking, is designed to show the fallacy of the Ontological Method referred to in the text, and thus indirectly afford a vindication of the Observational Method of Reid and Stewart, as the only valid means of building up the science of Metaphysics, or of Real Existence.

The purely formal laws of thought are three:—

1. The law of Identity, or that in virtue of which we affirm that any given subject of thought is itself—A is A.

2. The law of Contradiction, or that in virtue of which we assert that a given subject is not the contradictory of itself—or A cannot be A and not-A. To say of a given subject that it is at once itself and not itself, is altogether to abolish it.

3. The law of Excluded Middle, or that in virtue of which we assert that there is no middle between two contradictories, and that a subject, while it cannot be both, must be one or other of these—A cannot be B, and not-B; it is either B, or not-B.

Such are the formal or logical laws. The first question to be determined regarding them, is as to their proper character and province. And here the first and grand point to be noted is, that while those laws are omnipotent to prescribe what knowledge or existence is *not*, they are powerless, of themselves, or independently, to tell what either *is*, or furnish us with any fact regarding either the known or the existent.

Those laws are positive and negative. The law of Identity is positive. It asserts that a thing is itself. The law of Excluded

Middle is both positive and negative; for it alleges that a given subject is either of two contradictories, and that it cannot be both. The law of Contradiction is negative or positive as it may be taken; for it says that a given subject cannot be its contradictory—A cannot be not-A; that A = not-A = 0. Negatively taken, those laws declare existence impossible, on their violation. That absolutely is not, which in thought violates any one of those laws. They shut out from the sphere of existence the properly unthinkable. They afford the conditions which must be fulfilled, before existence is possible. That subject which is itself, and not itself, is nothing by the law of Contradiction. That subject which is alleged to be both of two contradictories, or neither of these, is nothing, by the law of Excluded Middle. Those laws thus guard the portals of reality; they are the utmost bounds of being; beyond their limits is the sphere of the unreal.

But while affording the absolute conditions of the possible, as well in existence as in thought, what, it may be asked, is the function of those laws with regard to real or actual existence? Within the sphere of what is, be it the known, or the existent, those laws afford no absolute or irrespective knowledge. This is obvious from their essential nature. They are regulative and explicative, but, of themselves, they give no new matter of knowledge; they add nothing to what we independently know. The essential condition of the actual application of each of those laws, is that *some* matter, *i.e.*, a *subject*,—a notion or proposition,—be given. Potentially, they are applicable to every subject; actually, they are never applied, unless to *this* or *that*, *i.e.*, a determinate subject. To take the law of Identity,—this law in its barren generality asserts that A, or any subject, is equal to itself. In its special application, it asserts that *this* subject, say the class *animal*, is equal to itself; *i.e.*, when explicated, to *all* its constituent parts. But it is obvious that we must have the subject, and have it in its totality—in this case the class animal—before we can assert its equality with its definite constituent parts; or before the law of Identity, which merely preserves harmony in our thinking,

comes into exercise. The same is manifestly true of the laws of Contradiction and Excluded Middle. While we are able to say of any subject of thought whatever,—that it cannot be both what it is, and what it is not—itself and not itself—we can never say this of any subject in particular, until it is within knowledge—or actually present to thought. In other words, the law cannot come into operation until definite matter is afforded upon which it may act. And with regard to the law of Excluded Middle, we must have, in order to its actual application, a given subject and two notions that are mutually contradictory. These are the essential conditions of the operation of the law; and these being given, we are able, and then only able, to say, that the subject, while it cannot be both notions, must be either.

It is thus obvious, that the actual application of each of those laws is regulated by certain conditions; and that the result obtained by them is in every instance purely dependent or hypothetical. In point of fact, they are best stated in a hypothetical form. Thus the law of Identity is simply, if A is, it is A; the law of Contradiction, if A is, it is not not-A, which is simply the negative aspect of the former law. The law of Excluded Middle, if A is, it is either B, or not-B. The moment we say that A is—*this* or *that* subject is—we transcend the sphere of those laws, and pass into that of *real* existence. For this assertion of the existence of the subject, we need a guarantee wholly distinct from the formal laws of thought. Beyond affording a hypothetical or conditioned result, those laws are thus utterly impotent, with regard either to the known or the existent. As they do not come into actual exercise until they are furnished with some matter on which to act, and of themselves add nothing to our knowledge, but merely prevent it from self-annihilation, they are quite powerless to afford any positive information regarding what is, whether this be a condition of knowledge or of existence. They are all-powerful to regulate and fashion any given matter; and when, for example, we are independently made aware that one of two contradictory alternatives is false, those laws warrant us in laying down the

other as true. But they are wholly unable to furnish us, in the first place, with any character either of knowledge or of existence—as, for instance, to determine *which* of two contradictory alternatives must exclusively be thought by us, and is, therefore, alone real. In a word, no twisting of those laws will ever directly bring out of them a single positive datum of reality.

The proper sphere of those laws is thus manifestly that of matter already subjected to *definition*. To enable the purely logical or formal laws to come into fruitful operation, they must be furnished with definite matter—they must be transported to the sphere of what is known, or is supposed to be. When a subject is fixed down by definition, the logical laws enable us to say, that any supposition which contradicts this definition is incompatible with the subject of the definition. But we cannot say regarding any subject, that a supposition or attribute is contradictory of its character, unless we beforehand know this character by definition. Thus the law of Contradiction merely enacts, that we should not define the same subject by contradictory attributes. What any subject is, or whether it really is, this law does not enable us to say. All that it warrants us in affirming is, that if it be, it is not both as the definition characterises it, and as the contradictory of the definition marks it out. The definition with which we start may or may not be applicable to its subject, *i.e.*, it may or may not be true;—of this the law of Contradiction takes no cognisance. It is sufficient, but at the same time absolutely necessary for the operation of this law, that there be *a* definition; and the principle then merely undertakes to keep our thinking about that definition consistent and harmonious.

The process known as *reductio ad absurdum*, in geometry, affords a good illustration of the true import and legitimate application of the law of Contradiction. To take an example;—we seek to show that two straight lines cannot enclose a space. We suppose two lines actually enclosing a space. But we find by a comparison of those lines with the definition of a straight line, that they want or possess properties, which straight lines,

by definition, possess or want. But the same lines, by this law, cannot have contradictory properties; *i.e.*, cannot be straight lines and not straight lines. We thus, by showing that the lines which do enclose a space are not straight lines, reach the more general conclusion that two straight lines cannot enclose a space.

Such is a general view of the nature and sphere of the Formal Laws of thought, especially the Principle of Contradiction. We are now in a position to estimate the worth of any attempt at determining the essential character or condition, either of human knowledge, or of knowledge in general, by the law of Contradiction. The problem may be thus stated:—Given the *fact* of knowledge, to determine *what* knowledge in general, or knowledge as possessed by any intelligence, is and must be. We are, of course, by the conditions of the problem, supposed entirely ignorant of *what* any knowledge is, be it human or divine; we are allowed merely to assume the fact, or rather the possibility of knowledge. For an application of the law of Contradiction, to be thorough-going, must start, not from the assumption that *this* or *that* knowledge is, for such is a fact of real existence, and therefore wholly unknown to this law; but, at the most, simply from the possibility of that whose necessary and essential condition it is adduced as competent to establish. In truth, an absolutely perfect speculative doctrine of the kind in question should, in the first place, vindicate the possibility of that whose essential condition it professes to furnish. But even with the assumption of the fact of knowledge in general, without any determination of what it is, which amounts to little more than the postulate of its possibility, the law of Contradiction is, of itself, utterly powerless to afford its essential condition or nature. All professed evolution of the essential condition of knowledge, from the bare fact of knowledge in general, results either in the idle assertion of the fact in a negative form, or, if it goes beyond this, involves a reasoning in a circle—is petitory of the point at issue. Let it be observed, in the first place, that from the conditions of the problem, we set out with no *definition* of knowledge. We

confessedly know nothing of *what* it is. Supposing it to be possible, we profess to determine what it must be. Or, if it should be preferred, let it be said that we start from the fact of knowledge in general. Now what does the law of Contradiction enable and necessitate us to say with this assumption? This law says that a thing is not the contradictory of itself. So that by the law we are enabled and necessitated to say, that if there be knowledge, or as there is knowledge, there is not at the same time no knowledge. This is a tolerably secure, but very idle conclusion.

This, however, is by no means the result with which we are supposed to be furnished as the product of the law of Contradiction on the point at issue. Though starting only from the fact of knowledge in general, we are said to land in a conclusion, by help of the law of Contradiction alone, unaided by experience, regarding the nature, the essential condition, of knowledge and of all knowledge. But how can such a result be reached by the law of Contradiction? Only, of course, by showing that a particular hypothesis, or supposition in regard to the nature of knowledge —what knowledge is—is contradictory of the fact, or possibility of knowledge in general. This it is utterly beyond the power of the principle of Contradiction to show; for the obvious reason, that the condition under which the law is applicable, is wanting in such a case, viz., a definition of what knowledge is. The only supposition which the law of Contradiction can discard as incompetent, because contradictory, is the general and idle supposition, that there may be no knowledge while there is knowledge. We have given us at the most the bare fact of knowledge; knowledge, for aught we as yet know, may be anything whatever. It may be that kind which is found in human experience, or it may be something altogether different. So long as we are in this state of ignorance in regard to knowledge—so long in fact as we do not know something of *what* knowledge is,—or have no *definition* of it,—we cannot by the law of Contradiction say that any hypothesis whatever, in regard to the nature, is inconsistent with, or contradictory of the fact of knowledge, and thereby determine its

essential condition. If, as in the *reductio ad absurdum* of geometry, we were furnished at the outset with a definition of the subject, in regard to which we seek to discard a particular hypothesis as contradictory, and thus establish the opposite conclusion as true and applicable, the law of contradiction might have a valid and useful field of operation. It would then be furnished with its indispensable condition, viz., a definition; and would enable and necessitate us to discard any contradictory or counter-proposition. But to supply the legitimate condition of the application of the law—to define knowledge—is at once to violate the conditions of the problem, and to supersede the office which the law of Contradiction is called in to perform. For if we have a definition of knowledge, or of any part of it, we start from more than the bare fact,—we know *what* knowledge is,—and know this before the law of Contradiction is called into operation.

A recent writer on Metaphysics in this country,[1] professes to have found, by means of a purely Formal Method,—in other words, by the law of Contradiction,—the essential condition of all knowledge, be it human or divine, or that which, if there be knowledge at all, must constitute its form or law. This great discovery is properly made the groundwork of a Demonstrative theory of knowledge and existence, which is justly proclaimed, on the proviso that the discovery is genuine, as the last and only system of Metaphysics—superseding all past philosophies, and foreclosing equally all future divergent speculative efforts. Human knowledge has thus at length reached the climax of perfection, or rather got to the limit of its tether, in the discovery of the essential law of universal knowledge and absolute existence. The essential condition of knowledge, according to this author, is contained in the principle, that "along with whatever any intelligence knows, it must, as the ground or condition of its knowledge, have some cognisance

[1] *Institutes of Metaphysic; the Theory of Knowing and Being.* By James F. Ferrier, A.B. Oxon., Professor of Moral Philosophy and Political Economy, St. Andrews. 1854.

of itself."[1] And of this principle he professes to find the guarantee in the law of Contradiction. The point at issue is thus, not whether the principle now stated form the necessary condition of all knowledge whatever, nor even whether it be a necessary law or condition of human knowledge. The true and primary question is, whether the principle can be directly established by the law of Contradiction, or whether it follows necessarily from that law, as applied to the bare fact of knowledge in general. As this is the turning-point of the whole discussion, it may be proper to allow the author of the *Institutes* to speak for himself, and show, if he can, how this principle is established by the law of Contradiction.

"Strictly speaking," says Mr. Ferrier, "the proposition (the primary law of knowledge just mentioned) cannot be demonstrated, because, being itself the absolute starting-point, it cannot be deduced from any antecedent data; but it may be explained in such a way as to leave no doubt as to its axiomatic character. It claims all the stringency of a geometrical axiom, and its claims, it is conceived, are irresistible. If it were possible for an intelligence to receive knowledge at *any one* time, without knowing that it was his knowledge, it would be possible for him to do this at *all* times. So that an intelligent being might be endowed with knowledge, without once, during the whole term of his existence, knowing that he possessed it. Is there not a contradiction involved in that supposition? But if that supposition be a contradiction, it is equally contradictory to suppose that an intelligence can be conscious of his knowledge, at any single moment, without being conscious of it as his. A man has knowledge, and is cognisant of perceptions only when he brings them home to himself. If he were not aware that they were his, he could not be aware of them at all. Can *I* know without knowing that it is *I* who know? No; truly. But if a man, in knowing anything, must always know that he knows it, he must always be self-conscious. And, therefore, *reason* establishes our first proposition as a necessary truth, as

[1] *Institutes of Metaphysic.* Prop. I. The Primary Law or Condition of all Knowledge, p. 75.

an axiom, the denial of which involves a contradiction, or is, in plain words, nonsense."[1]

This alleged evolution of the essential condition of knowledge, by the law of Contradiction, from knowledge in general, is, from first to last, the merest *petitio principii.* What is the supposition which is said to be contradictory of the fact of knowledge? The supposition that an intelligence can know aught without, in the same act, knowing itself. This is, however, only mediately contradictory of the fact of knowledge; and the point on which the proof hinges is the preliminary step, when it is said to be a contradiction for an intelligence to know, *without knowing that he knows,* or *without being conscious of his knowledge.* This is, of course, perfectly indisputable by the law of contradiction, on the supposition that *an intelligence knowing,* and an intelligence *being conscious of his knowledge,* are already known, or supposed, to be identical. Unless those terms are, in the first instance, regarded as the same, the contradictory of the latter, *i.e.*, *un*consciousness of knowledge, cannot be known or held to be the contradictory of the former, *i.e.*, the *fact* of knowledge. The law of Contradiction assures us, that knowledge cannot be knowledge, and not knowledge; and *if* the consciousness of his knowledge be essential to knowledge by an intelligence, it is no doubt a contradiction to say, that an intelligence has knowledge when he has not the consciousness of it, *i.e.*, when he has not knowledge. But this is to assume that we already know something of *what* knowledge is. It is, in fact, to proceed on a *definition* of knowledge, and a definition which tells us that the consciousness by an intelligence of his knowledge, is his knowing or knowledge. And this information is already possessed *before* the law of Contradiction is applied. How, then, can we attribute to that law what we assume in order to its application to the case in hand?

The problem here essayed is, indeed, as has been fully shown, an impossible one. If we are entirely ignorant of everything beyond the simple fact of the existence of know-

[1] *Institutes of Metaphysic,* pp. 84, 85.

ledge, or know only that there *is* knowledge, without being informed *what* the thing we speak of is, we are totally unable, by the law of Contradiction alone, to affirm that any supposition whatever, in regard to the nature of knowledge, be it unconsciousness of knowledge, or any other, is contradictory of the fact of knowledge. Before this law can come into play, we must be furnished with some information regarding the nature or character of knowledge, and this we are excluded from possessing by the very conditions of our problem. A state of absolute ignorance of what knowledge is, is the starting-point of the formal Ontologist; it is also his only legitimate landing-place.

But even supposing that we start from the datum *consciousness of knowledge*, which must now be borrowed from Experience, we are unable, by the law of Contradiction alone, to reach the alleged second step of the process, or to show formally that this involves *consciousness of knowledge as his.* It is, in the second place, said to be a contradiction to suppose that an intelligence can be *conscious of his knowledge without being concious of it as his*, and, therefore, without being conscious of himself. There is no doubt a contradiction in the supposition now specified, and we know it to be a contradiction, if *the consciousness by an intelligence of his knowledge*, and *the consciousness of it as his*, be but different expressions of the *same* thing, and if we are already aware of this; for, in that case, the contradictory of the latter is, of course, the contradictory of the former, and is known by us to be such. But if these terms be thus simply identical, the whole contradiction amounts merely to this, that an intelligence cannot at once be *conscious* and *unconscious* of his knowledge. Being supposed or known to be conscious of his knowledge, he cannot also be supposed or known to be unconscious of it. Hereby, however, we do not advance a single step towards showing that *consciousness of his knowledge* implies *consciousness of knowledge as his.* We only formally protect ourselves from holding that our first supposition is not what we supposed it to be.

If, on the other hand, this latter term, viz., *the consciousness*

of knowledge as his, be held to be anything different from, and additional to, the former term, viz., *the consciousness of his knowledge*, there is not necessarily any contradiction whatever in supposing that it is wanting where this term is found,—for the two terms being in this case different, the contradictory of the one is consequently not necessarily the contradictory of the other. So far from there being any necessity of this kind, it is, in truth, simply impossible that the contradictory of one term can be the contradictory of any other term not itself. Not A is the contradictory of A; it is not the contradictory of any other term, as of B. *Unconsciousness of knowledge as his* is the contradictory of *consciousness of knowledge as his;* it is not the contradictory of *consciousness of his knowledge*,—if this latter notion be anything less than, and therefore different from, the former; or, in a word, unless the terms *consciousness of his knowledge*, and *consciousness of knowledge as his*, be, in the first place, absolutely identified. We never, therefore, by the legitimate application of the law of Contradiction, advance a footstep in the line of what knowledge is. In short, the whole process of evolution thus elaborately given, amounts simply to saying that the want of self-knowledge is no knowledge; and, accordingly, that wherever there is knowledge, there is knowledge of self. No doubt this is perfectly true on the principle of Contradiction, but we are still as far as ever from any information in regard to the preliminary point, whether self-knowledge *be* the essential condition of knowledge in general, which, though the whole point at issue, is here virtually assumed.

Descending, however, still further within the sphere of Experience, and learning from it that there is a particular kind of knowledge, viz., the knowledge possessed by human intelligence, may not the law of Contradiction enable us to determine *what* human knowledge is and must be? Suppose we find by experience that we know something, and that what is proposed to us is not the something which we know, may not the law of Contradiction from that lead us to determine what it is we actually know? and thus be the guarantee of what we do and must know? By experience we find, let us sup-

pose, that X is not an object of knowledge by itself. We do not apprehend X alone, or *per se*. We yet apprehend X. May not the law of Contradiction come in at this point, and tell us *what besides* X we must apprehend, in order also that we may at the same time apprehend X? This even the law of Contradiction cannot accomplish. All that this law can do in the case now supposed, is to tell us indefinitely that as X is apprehended, yet not *per se*, it is apprehended along with *something more;* but as to what, in particular, this addition to X is, the principle of Contradiction can give us no information whatever. It may be X + A, or X + B, or X + C, or X + anything, provided only it be *something*, so far as the law of Contradiction is concerned. It is Experience, and that alone, which can tell us *what* the addition to X is, which is apprehended along with it.

But further, to call in the aid of the law of Contradiction in the case supposed, to determine what it is we know, besides being useless, is superfluous. We are supposed to know or apprehend X, but *not alone*. We have this information from Experience, before we call in the aid of the law of Contradiction. If so, we have also from experience the knowledge or apprehension of the addition to X, along with which it is apprehended. For, if we apprehend X, but not alone, we necessarily apprehend it along with that besides itself, which is the condition of its apprehension. We therefore, by experience, know *what* it is we know along with X, and do not need to call to our aid any formal principle whatever.

Far from enabling us to determine what all knowledge must be, the principle of Contradiction is thus, of itself, utterly powerless to tell us what our own knowledge, in any one of its positive conditions, is or must be. In order to do this, it must start from the fact or possibility of knowledge in general, and starting from this point it is, as has been shown, absolutely impotent to fix a single positive condition of any knowledge whatever, be it human or divine. The principle that intelligence in knowing an object is necessarily cognisant of *itself* cannot even be established, by the law of Contra-

diction as a condition of human knowledge. Whether this is, or is not, a condition of human knowledge is, of course, a different question. This refers to a matter of *fact*, and must be determined by the usual method of Observation. The Formal Method of the *Institutes*, while vaunted as omnipotent over all knowledge, is thus powerless in respect even of furnishing to human intelligence the solitary condition of knowledge to which it would accord a sphere so absolute. And as the whole system is confessedly perilled on the validity of its Method and First Principle, it is thus sapped from the foundation. The series of demonstrations of which the system is made up has the consistency of a "rope of sand." This is the more to be regretted, inasmuch as, had the work in question united soundness and solidity to the acuteness, ingenuity, and elegance which characterise it, it must have taken a high place in philosophical literature.

BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIRS

OF

ADAM SMITH, LL.D.
WILLIAM ROBERTSON, D.D.
THOMAS REID, D.D.

BY DUGALD STEWART.

PREFACE.

THE three Memoirs contained in this Volume were written in compliance with a practice, which, after the example of some foreign Academies, the founders of the Royal Society of Edinburgh were anxious to introduce at the time of its first establishment. In forming this design, they indulged the hope of being able, not only to preserve, in their *Transactions*, such notices with respect to the lives of their more distinguished Colleagues, as might be of use to future Biographers, but to record, while facts were yet recent, and recollections lively, the impressions which their characters and manners had left on the memory of their surviving friends. A portrait executed in these circumstances might, they thought, even if it should exhibit nothing but a faithful outline, prevent, at a more distant period, those misconceptions both of men and of things, which are the natural consequences of oral tradition.

In this light—of Academical Contributions—and in this light alone, I should wish the following Essays to be considered by my readers. They are not meant to supersede a more detailed account of the eminent men to whom they relate, when any other person shall choose afterwards to resume the same portions of the literary History of Scotland; far less to interfere with the province of those who delight in gleaning the anecdotes and memorable sayings ascribed to distinguished characters. In the first and third *Memoirs*, indeed, I believe that I have nearly exhausted all the authentic information which it was possible to collect; and in *these*, accordingly,—as the few incidents, which diversify a philosopher's life, derive

their whole interest from the light they throw on the history of his studies, and on the progress of his mind,—I have been induced to connect with the slender thread of my narration a variety of speculative discussions and illustrations, for the length of which, I trust, that my anxiety to do justice to the memory of the dead will be a sufficient apology. With respect to Dr. Robertson, whose personal habits, as well as official station, engaged him in more extensive connexions with the world, and whose favourite pursuits directed his attention to researches very different from those which have employed my life,—an ample field still remains to reward the labours both of the biographer and of the critic. I should be happy to see such a task undertaken by a competent hand; and have done something to facilitate its execution, by the original letters from Mr. Hume and others, which I have printed in the Appendix.

The additions which have occurred to me in revising my papers for the present publication are inclosed within brackets,* to prevent any confusion that might arise from a difference of dates. The whole of these additions are confined to the Notes; the Text remaining (with the exception of some trifling verbal corrections) in its original state. The Notes annexed to the Life of Mr. Smith being entirely new, I have not thought it necessary to distinguish them by any typographical mark. It is sufficient for me to mention, in this place, that they were written in the year 1810.

* [The present manuscript insertions of the Author are, besides the square brackets, further marked out by the words, *Author's last addition*; whilst the Notes of the Editor are here sufficiently distinguished by an asterisk, &c.]

ACCOUNT

OF

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

ADAM SMITH LL.D.

FROM THE TRANSACTIONS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH.

[READ BY MR. STEWART, JANUARY 21, AND MARCH 18, 1793.]

ACCOUNT

OF

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

ADAM SMITH, LL.D.

SECTION I.

FROM MR. SMITH'S BIRTH TILL THE PUBLICATION OF THE THEORY OF MORAL SENTIMENTS.

ADAM SMITH, author of the *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, was the son of Adam Smith, comptroller of the customs at Kirkaldy,[1] and of Margaret Douglas, daughter of Mr. Douglas of Strathenry. He was the only child of the marriage, and was born at Kirkaldy on the 5th of June 1723, a few months after the death of his father.

His constitution during infancy was infirm and sickly, and required all the tender solicitude of his surviving parent. She was blamed for treating him with an unlimited indulgence;

[1] Mr. Smith, the father, was a native of Aberdeenshire, and, in the earlier part of his life, practised at Edinburgh as a Writer to the Signet. He was afterwards Private Secretary to the Earl of Loudoun, (during the time he held the offices of Principal Secretary of State for Scotland, and of Keeper of the Great Seal,) and continued in this situation till 1713 or 1714, when he was appointed Comptroller of the Customs at Kirkaldy. He was also Clerk to the Courts-martial and Councils of War for Scotland; an office which he held from 1707 till his death. As it is now seventy years since he died, the accounts I have received of him are very imperfect; but, from the particulars already mentioned, it may be presumed, that he was a man of more than common abilities.

but it produced no unfavourable effects on his temper or his dispositions: and he enjoyed the rare satisfaction of being able to repay her affection, by every attention that filial gratitude could dictate, during the long period of sixty years.

An accident which happened to him when he was about three years old, is of too interesting a nature to be omitted in the account of so valuable a life. He had been carried by his mother to Strathenry, on a visit to his uncle, Mr. Douglas, and was one day amusing himself alone at the door of the house, when he was stolen by a party of that set of vagrants who are known in Scotland by the name of tinkers. Luckily he was soon missed by his uncle, who, hearing that some vagrants had passed, pursued them, with what assistance he could find, till he overtook them in Leslie Wood; and was the happy instrument of preserving to the world a genius which was destined not only to extend the boundaries of science, but to enlighten and reform the commercial policy of Europe.

The school of Kirkaldy, where Mr. Smith received the first rudiments of his education, was then taught by Mr. David Miller, a teacher, in his day, of considerable reputation, and whose name deserves to be recorded on account of the eminent men whom that very obscure seminary produced while under his direction. Of this number were Mr. Oswald of Dunikeir;[1] his brother, Dr. John Oswald, afterwards Bishop of Raphoe; and our late excellent colleague, the Reverend Dr. John Drysdale: all of them nearly contemporary with Mr. Smith, and united with him through life by the closest ties of friendship. One of his school-fellows is still alive;[2] and to his kindness I am principally indebted for the scanty materials which form the first part of this narrative.

Among these companions of his earliest years, Mr. Smith soon attracted notice, by his passion for books, and by the extraordinary powers of his memory. The weakness of his bodily constitution prevented him from partaking in their more active amusements; but he was much beloved by them on

[1] See Note A.

[2] George Drysdale, Esq. of Kirkaldy, brother of the late Dr. Drysdale.

account of his temper, which, though warm, was to an uncommon degree friendly and generous. Even then he was remarkable for those habits which remained with him through life, of speaking to himself when alone, and of *absence* in company.

From the Grammar-school of Kirkaldy, he was sent, in 1737, to the University of Glasgow, where he remained till 1740, when he went to Balliol College, Oxford, as an exhibitioner[1] on Snell's foundation.

Dr. Maclaine of the Hague, who was a fellow-student of Mr. Smith's at Glasgow, told me some years ago, that his favourite pursuits while at that University were mathematics and natural philosophy; and I remember to have heard my father remind him of a geometrical problem of considerable difficulty, about which he was occupied at the time when their acquaintance commenced, and which had been proposed to him as an exercise by the celebrated Dr. Simson.

These, however, were certainly not the sciences in which he was formed to excel; nor did they long divert him from pursuits more congenial to his mind. What Lord Bacon says of Plato may be justly applied to him: "Illum, licet ad rempublicam non accessisset, tamen naturâ et inclinatione omnino ad res civiles propensum, vires eo præcipue intendisse; neque de Philosophia Naturali admodum sollicitum esse; nisi quatenus ad Philosophi nomen et celebritatem tuendam, et ad majestatem quandam moralibus et civilibus doctrinis addendam et aspergendam sufficeret."[2] The study of human nature in all

[1] [As the word *exhibitioner* has misled a French author, to whose critical acquaintance with the English language I am indebted for a very elegant translation of this Memoir, I think it proper to mention, that it is used here to denote a student who enjoys a salary to assist him in carrying on his academical education. "The word *Exhibition*," says Johnson, "is much used for pensions allowed to scholars at the University." In the translation above referred to, as well as in the *Notice* prefixed to M. Garnier's translation of the *Wealth of Nations*, the clause in the text is thus rendered: *il entra au collège de Balliol à Oxford, en qualité de démonstrateur de la fondation de Snell.*

With respect to Snell's foundation, "the largest, perhaps, and most liberal in Britain," see the *Statistical Account of the University of Glasgow*, by Dr. Reid.]

[2] *Redargutio Philosophiarum.*

its branches, more particularly of the political history of mankind, opened a boundless field to his curiosity and ambition; and while it afforded scope to all the various powers of his versatile and comprehensive genius, gratified his ruling passion, of contributing to the happiness and the improvement of society. To this study, diversified at his leisure hours by the less severe occupations of polite literature, he seems to have devoted himself almost entirely from the time of his removal to Oxford; but he still retained, and retained even in advanced years, a recollection of his early acquisitions, which not only added to the splendour of his conversation, but enabled him to exemplify some of his favourite theories concerning the natural progress of the mind in the investigation of truth, by the history of those sciences in which the connexion and succession of discoveries may be traced with the greatest advantage. If I am not mistaken, too, the influence of his early taste for the Greek geometry may be remarked in the elementary clearness and fulness, bordering sometimes upon prolixity, with which he frequently states his political reasonings. The lectures of the profound and eloquent Dr. Hutcheson, which he had attended previous to his departure from Glasgow, and of which he always spoke in terms of the warmest admiration, had, it may be reasonably presumed, a considerable effect in directing his talents to their proper objects.[1]

I have not been able to collect any information with respect to that part of his youth which was spent in England. I have heard him say, that he employed himself frequently in the practice of translation, (particularly from the French,) with a view to the improvement of his own style: and he used often to express a favourable opinion of the utility of such exercises, to all who cultivate the art of composition. It is much to be regretted, that none of his juvenile attempts in this way have been preserved; as the few specimens which his writings contain of his skill as a translator, are sufficient to show the eminence he had attained in a walk of literature, which, in our country, has been so little frequented by men of genius.

[1] See Note B.

It was probably also at this period of his life, that he cultivated with the greatest care the study of languages. The knowledge he possessed of these, both ancient and modern, was uncommonly extensive and accurate; and, in him, was subservient, not to a vain parade of tasteless erudition, but to a familiar acquaintance with everything that could illustrate the institutions, the manners, and the ideas of different ages and nations. How intimately he had once been conversant with the more ornamental branches of learning; in particular, with the works of the Roman, Greek, French, and Italian poets, appeared sufficiently from the hold which they kept of his memory, after all the different occupations and inquiries in which his maturer faculties had been employed.[1] In the English language, the variety of poetical passages which he was not only accustomed to refer to occasionally, but which he was able to repeat with correctness, appeared surprising even to those whose attention had never been directed to more important acquisitions.

After a residence at Oxford of seven years, he returned to Kirkaldy, and lived two years with his mother, engaged in study, but without any fixed plan for his future life. He had been originally destined for the Church of England, and with that view had been sent to Oxford; but not finding the ecclesiastical profession suitable to his taste, he chose to consult, in this instance, his own inclination, in preference to the wishes of his friends; and abandoning at once all the schemes which their prudence had formed for him, he resolved to return to his own country, and to limit his ambition to the uncertain prospect of obtaining, in time, some one of those moderate preferments, to which literary attainments lead in Scotland.

In the year 1748, he fixed his residence at Edinburgh, and

[1] The uncommon degree in which Mr. Smith retained possession, even to the close of his life, of different branches of knowledge which he had long ceased to cultivate, has often been remarked to me by my learned colleague and friend, Mr. Dalzel, Professor of Greek in this University.—Mr. Dalzel mentioned particularly the readiness and correctness of Mr. Smith's memory on philological subjects, and the acuteness and skill he displayed in various conversations with him on some of the *minutiæ* of Greek grammar.

during that and the following years, read lectures on Rhetoric and Belles-lettres, under the patronage of Lord Kames. About this time, too, he contracted a very intimate friendship, which continued without interruption till his death, with Mr. Alexander Wedderburn, now Lord Loughborough, and with Mr. William Johnstone, now Mr. Pulteney.

At what particular period his acquaintance with Mr. David Hume commenced, does not appear from any information that I have received; but from some papers, now in the possession of Mr. Hume's nephew, and which he has been so obliging as to allow me to peruse, their acquaintance seems to have grown into friendship before the year 1752. It was a friendship on both sides founded on the admiration of genius, and the love of simplicity; and, which forms an interesting circumstance in the history of each of these eminent men, from the ambition which both have shown to record it to posterity.

In 1751, he was elected Professor of Logic in the University of Glasgow; and, the year following, he was removed to the Professorship of Moral Philosophy in the same University, upon the death of Mr. Thomas Craigie, the immediate successor of Dr. Hutcheson. In this situation he remained thirteen years; a period he used frequently to look back to, as the most useful and happy of his life. It was indeed a situation in which he was eminently fitted to excel, and in which the daily labours of his profession were constantly recalling his attention to his favourite pursuits, and familiarizing his mind to those important speculations he was afterwards to communicate to the world. In this view, though it afforded, in the meantime, but a very narrow scene for his ambition, it was probably instrumental, in no inconsiderable degree, to the future eminence of his literary character.

Of Mr. Smith's lectures while a Professor at Glasgow, no part has been preserved, excepting what he himself published in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, and in the *Wealth of Nations*. The Society, therefore, I am persuaded, will listen with pleasure to the following short account of them, for which I am indebted to a gentleman who was formerly one of Mr.

Smith's pupils, and who continued till his death to be one of his most intimate and valued friends.[1]

"In the Professorship of Logic, to which Mr. Smith was appointed on his first introduction into this University, he soon saw the necessity of departing widely from the plan that had been followed by his predecessors, and of directing the attention of his pupils to studies of a more interesting and useful nature than the Logic and Metaphysics of the schools. Accordingly, after exhibiting a general view of the powers of the mind, and explaining so much of the ancient logic as was requisite, to gratify curiosity with respect to an artificial method of reasoning, which had once occupied the universal attention of the learned, he dedicated all the rest of his time to the delivery of a system of Rhetoric and Belles-lettres. The best method of explaining and illustrating the various powers of the human mind, the most useful part of metaphysics, arises from an examination of the several ways of communicating our thoughts by speech, and from an attention to the principles of those literary compositions which contribute to persuasion or entertainment. By these arts, everything that we perceive or feel, every operation of our minds, is expressed and delineated in such a manner, that it may be clearly distinguished and remembered. There is, at the same time, no branch of literature more suited to youth at their first entrance upon philosophy than this, which lays hold of their taste and their feelings.

"It is much to be regretted, that the manuscript containing Mr. Smith's lectures on this subject was destroyed before his death. The first part, in point of composition, was highly finished; and the whole discovered strong marks of taste and original genius. From the permission given to students of taking notes, many observations and opinions contained in these lectures have either been detailed in separate dissertations, or engrossed in general collections, which have since been given to the public. But these, as might be expected, have lost the air of originality and the distinctive character

[1] [Mr. Millar, the late celebrated Professor of Law in the University of Glasgow.]

which they received from their first author, and are often obscured by that multiplicity of commonplace matter in which they are sunk and involved.

"About a year after his appointment to the Professorship of Logic, Mr. Smith was elected to the Chair of Moral Philosophy. His course of lectures on this subject was divided into four parts. The first contained Natural Theology; in which he considered the proofs of the being and attributes of God, and those principles of the human mind upon which religion is founded. The second comprehended Ethics, strictly so called, and consisted chiefly of the doctrines which he afterwards published in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments.* In the third part, he treated at more length of that branch of Morality which relates to *Justice,* and which, being susceptible of precise and accurate rules, is for that reason capable of a full and particular explanation.

"Upon this subject he followed the plan that seems to be suggested by Montesquieu; endeavouring to trace the gradual progress of jurisprudence, both public and private, from the rudest to the most refined ages, and to point out the effects of those arts which contribute to subsistence, and to the accumulation of property, in producing correspondent improvements or alterations in law and government. This important branch of his labours he also intended to give to the public; but this intention, which is mentioned in the conclusion of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments,* he did not live to fulfil.

"In the last part of his lectures, he examined those political regulations which are founded, not upon the principle of *justice,* but that of *expediency,* and which are calculated to increase the riches, the power, and the prosperity of a State. Under this view, he considered the political institutions relating to commerce, to finances, to ecclesiastical and military establishments. What he delivered on these subjects contained the substance of the work he afterwards published under the title of *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations.*

"There was no situation in which the abilities of Mr. Smith

appeared to greater advantage than as a Professor. In delivering his lectures, he trusted almost entirely to extemporary elocution. His manner, though not graceful, was plain and unaffected; and, as he seemed to be always interested in the subject, he never failed to interest his hearers. Each discourse consisted commonly of several distinct propositions, which he successively endeavoured to prove and illustrate. These propositions, when announced in general terms, had, from their extent, not unfrequently something of the air of a paradox. In his attempts to explain them, he often appeared, at first, not to be sufficiently possessed of the subject, and spoke with some hesitation. As he advanced, however, the matter seemed to crowd upon him, his manner became warm and animated, and his expression easy and fluent. In points susceptible of controversy, you could easily discern, that he secretly conceived an opposition to his opinions, and that he was led upon this account to support them with greater energy and vehemence. By the fulness and variety of his illustrations, the subject gradually swelled in his hands, and acquired a dimension which, without a tedious repetition of the same views, was calculated to seize the attention of his audience, and to afford them pleasure, as well as instruction, in following the same object, through all the diversity of shades and aspects in which it was presented, and afterwards in tracing it backwards to that original proposition or general truth from which this beautiful train of speculation had proceeded.

"His reputation as a Professor was accordingly raised very high, and a multitude of students from a great distance resorted to the University, merely upon his account. Those branches of science which he taught became fashionable at this place, and his opinions were the chief topics of discussion in clubs and literary societies. Even the small peculiarities in his pronunciation or manner of speaking, became frequently the objects of imitation."

While Mr. Smith was thus distinguishing himself by his zeal and ability as a public teacher, he was gradually laying the foundation of a more extensive reputation, by preparing

for the press his system of morals. The first edition of this work appeared in 1759, under the title of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments.*

Hitherto Mr. Smith had remained unknown to the world as an author; nor have I heard that he had made a trial of his powers in any anonymous publications, excepting in a periodical work called *The Edinburgh Review*, which was begun in the year 1755, by some gentlemen of distinguished abilities, but which they were prevented by other engagements from carrying farther than the two first numbers. To this work Mr. Smith contributed a review of Dr. Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language*, and also a letter, addressed to the editors, containing some general observations on the state of literature in the different countries of Europe. In the former of these papers, he points out some defects in Dr. Johnson's plan, which he censures as not sufficiently grammatical. "The different significations of a word," he observes, "are indeed collected; but they are seldom digested into general classes, or ranged under the meaning which the word principally expresses: and sufficient care is not taken to distinguish the words apparently synonymous." To illustrate this criticism, he copies from Dr. Johnson the articles BUT and HUMOUR, and opposes to them the same articles digested agreeably to his own idea. The various significations of the word BUT are very nicely and happily discriminated. The other article does not seem to have been executed with equal care.

The observations on the state of learning in Europe are written with ingenuity and elegance; but are chiefly interesting, as they show the attention which the Author had given to the philosophy and literature of the Continent, at a period when they were not much studied in this island.

In the same volume with *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Mr. Smith published a Dissertation *On the Origin of Languages, and on the different Genius of those which are original and compounded.* The remarks I have to offer on these two discourses, I shall, for the sake of distinctness, make the subject of a separate Section.

SECTION II.

OF THE THEORY OF MORAL SENTIMENTS, AND THE DISSERTATION ON THE ORIGIN OF LANGUAGES.

THE science of Ethics has been divided by modern writers into two parts; the one comprehending the theory of Morals, and the other its practical doctrines. The questions about which the former is employed, are chiefly the two following. *First*, By what *principle* of our constitution are we led to form the notion of moral distinctions;—whether by that faculty which, in the other branches of human knowledge, perceives the distinction between truth and falsehood; or by a peculiar power of perception (called by some the Moral Sense) which is *pleased* with one set of qualities, and *displeased* with another? *Secondly*, What is the proper *object* of moral approbation? or, in other words, What is the common quality or qualities belonging to all the different modes of virtue? Is it benevolence; or a rational self-love; or a disposition (resulting from the ascendant of Reason over Passion) to act suitably to the different relations in which we are placed? These two questions seem to exhaust the whole theory of Morals. The scope of the one is to ascertain the origin of our moral ideas; that of the other, to refer the phenomena of moral perception to their most simple and general laws.

The practical doctrines of morality comprehend all those rules of conduct which profess to point out the proper ends of human pursuit, and the most effectual means of attaining them; to which we may add all those literary compositions, whatever be their particular form, which have for their aim to

fortify and animate our good dispositions, by delineations of the beauty, of the dignity, or of the utility of Virtue.

"I shall not inquire at present into the justness of this division. I shall only observe, that the words Theory and Practice are not, in this instance, employed in their usual acceptations. The theory of Morals does not bear, for example, the same relation to the practice of Morals, that the theory of Geometry bears to practical Geometry. In this last science, all the practical rules are founded on theoretical principles previously established: But in the former science, the practical rules are obvious to the capacities of all mankind; the theoretical principles form one of the most difficult subjects of discussion that has ever exercised the ingenuity of metaphysicians.

In illustrating the doctrines of practical morality, (if we make allowance for some unfortunate prejudices produced or encouraged by violent and oppressive systems of policy,) the ancients seem to have availed themselves of every light furnished by nature to human reason; and indeed those writers who, in later times, have treated the subject with the greatest success, are they who have followed most closely the footsteps of the Greek and the Roman philosophers. The theoretical question, too, concerning the essence of virtue, or the proper *object* of moral approbation, was a favourite topic of discussion in the ancient schools. The question concerning the *principle* of moral approbation, though not entirely of modern origin, has been chiefly agitated since the writings of Dr. Cudworth, in opposition to those of Mr. Hobbes; and it is this question accordingly, (recommended at once by its novelty and difficulty to the curiosity of speculative men,) that has produced most of the theories which characterize and distinguish from each other the later systems of moral philosophy.

It was the opinion of Dr. Cudworth, and also of Dr. Clarke, that moral distinctions are perceived by that power of the mind, which distinguishes truth from falsehood. This system it was one great object of Dr. Hutcheson's philosophy to refute, and in opposition to it, to show that the words Right and Wrong express certain agreeable and disagreeable qualities in

actions, which it is not the province of reason but of feeling to perceive; and to that power of perception which renders us susceptible of pleasure or of pain from the view of virtue or of vice, he gave the name of the *Moral Sense.* His reasonings upon this subject are in the main acquiesced in, both by Mr. Hume and Mr. Smith; but they differ from him in one important particular,—Dr. Hutcheson plainly supposing, that the Moral Sense is a simple principle of our constitution, of which no account can be given; whereas the other two philosophers have both attempted to analyze it into other principles more general. Their systems, however, with respect to it are very different from each other. According to Mr. Hume, all the qualities which are denominated virtuous, are useful either to ourselves or to others, and the pleasure which we derive from the view of them is the pleasure of *utility.* Mr. Smith, without rejecting entirely Mr. Hume's doctrine, proposes another of his own far more comprehensive; a doctrine with which he thinks all the most celebrated theories of morality invented by his predecessors coincide in part, and from some partial view of which he apprehends that they have all proceeded.

Of this very ingenious and original theory, I shall endeavour to give a short abstract. To those who are familiarly acquainted with it as it is stated by its author, I am aware that the attempt may appear superfluous; but I flatter myself that it will not be wholly useless to such as have not been much conversant in these abstract disquisitions, by presenting to them the leading principles of the system in one connected view, without those interruptions of the attention which necessarily arise from the author's various and happy illustrations, and from the many eloquent digressions which animate and adorn his composition.

The fundamental principle of Mr. Smith's theory is, that the primary objects of our moral perceptions are the actions of other men; and that our moral judgments with respect to our own conduct are only applications to ourselves of decisions which we have already passed on the conduct of our neighbour. His work accordingly includes *two* distinct inquiries, which, although sometimes blended together in the execution of his

general design, it is necessary for the reader to discriminate carefully from each other, in order to comprehend all the different bearings of the author's argument. The aim of the former inquiry is, to explain in what manner we learn to judge of the conduct of our neighbour; that of the latter, to show how, by applying these judgments to ourselves, we acquire *a sense of duty*, and a feeling of its paramount authority over all our other principles of action.

Our moral judgments, both with respect to our own conduct and that of others, include *two* distinct perceptions: *first*, A perception of conduct as right or wrong; and, *secondly*, A perception of the merit or demerit of the agent. To that quality of conduct which moralists, in general, express by the word Rectitude, Mr. Smith gives the name of Propriety; and he begins his theory with inquiring in what it consists, and how we are led to form the idea of it. The leading principles of his doctrine on this subject are comprehended in the following propositions:—

1. It is from our own experience alone, that we can form any idea of what passes in the mind of another person on any particular occasion; and the only way in which we can form this idea, is by supposing ourselves in the same circumstances with him, and conceiving how we should be affected if we were so situated. It is impossible for us, however, to conceive ourselves placed in any situation, whether agreeable or otherwise, without feeling an effect of the same kind with what would be produced by the situation itself; and of consequence the attention we give at any time to the circumstances of our neighbour, must affect us somewhat in the same manner, although by no means in the same degree, as if these circumstances were our own.

That this imaginary change of place with other men, is the real source of the interest we take in their fortunes, Mr. Smith attempts to prove by various instances. "When we see a stroke aimed, and just ready to fall upon the leg or arm of another person, we naturally shrink and draw back our own leg or our own arm; and when it does fall, we feel it in some

measure, and are hurt by it as well as the sufferer. The mob, when they are gazing at a dancer on the slack-rope, naturally writhe and twist and balance their own bodies, as they see him do, and as they feel that they themselves must do if in his situation."* The same thing takes place, according to Mr. Smith, in every case in which our attention is turned to the condition of our neighbour. "Whatever is the passion which arises from any object in the person principally concerned, an analogous emotion springs up, at the thought of his situation, in the breast of every attentive spectator. . . . . In every passion of which the mind of man is susceptible, the emotions of the bystander always correspond to what, by bringing the case home to himself, he imagines should be the sentiments of the sufferer."†

To this principle of our nature which leads us to enter into the situations of other men, and to partake with them in the passions which these situations have a tendency to excite, Mr. Smith gives the name of *Sympathy* or *Fellow-feeling*, which two words he employs as synonymous. Upon some occasions he acknowledges, that sympathy arises merely from the view of a certain emotion in another person; but in general it arises, not so much from the view of the emotion, as from that of the situation which excites it.

2. A sympathy or fellow-feeling between different persons is always agreeable to both. When I am in a situation which excites any passion, it is pleasant to me to know, that the spectators of my situation enter with me into all its various circumstances, and are affected with them in the same manner as I am myself. On the other hand, it is pleasant to the spectator to observe this correspondence of his emotions with mine.

3. When the spectator of another man's situation, upon bringing home to himself all its various circumstances, feels himself affected in the same manner with the person principally concerned, he approves of the affection or passion of this person as just and proper, and suitable to its object. The

* [*Moral Sentiments*, Part I. sect. i. chap. 1; sixth and later editions.]

† [Ibid.]

exceptions which occur to this observation are, according to Mr. Smith, only apparent. "A stranger, for example, passes by us in the street with all the marks of the deepest affliction: and we are immediately told, that he has just received the news of the death of his father. It is impossible that, in this case, we should not approve of his grief; yet it may often happen, without any defect of humanity on our part, that, so far from entering into the violence of his sorrow, we should scarce conceive the first movements of concern upon his account. We have learned, however, from experience, that such a misfortune naturally excites such a degree of sorrow; and we know, that if we took time to examine his situation fully, and in all its parts, we should, without doubt, most sincerely sympathize with him. It is upon the consciousness of this conditional sympathy that our approbation of his sorrow is founded, even in those cases in which that sympathy does not actually take place; and the general rules derived from our preceding experience of what our sentiments would commonly correspond with, correct upon this, as upon many other occasions, the impropriety of our present emotions."*

By the *Propriety* therefore of any affection or passion exhibited by another person, is to be understood its suitableness to the object which excites it. Of this suitableness I can judge only from the coincidence of the affection with that which I feel, when I conceive myself in the same circumstances; and the perception of this coincidence is the foundation of the sentiment of *Moral Approbation*.

4. Although, when we attend to the situation of another person, and conceive ourselves to be placed in his circumstances, an emotion of the same kind with that which he feels naturally arises in our own mind, yet this sympathetic emotion bears but a very small proportion, in point of degree, to what is felt by the person principally concerned. In order, therefore, to obtain the pleasure of mutual sympathy, nature teaches the spectator to strive, as much as he can, to *raise his emotion* to a level with that which the object would really produce:

* [Ibid. Part I. sect. i. chap. 3; sixth and later editions.]

and, on the other hand, she teaches the person whose passion this object has excited, to *bring it down*, as much as he can, to a level with that of the spectator.

5. Upon these two different efforts are founded *two* different sets of virtues. Upon the effort of the spectator to enter into the situation of the person principally concerned, and to raise his sympathetic emotions to a level with the emotions of the actor, are founded the gentle, the amiable virtues; the virtues of candid condescension and indulgent humanity. Upon the effort of the person principally concerned to lower his own emotions, so as to correspond as nearly as possible with those of the spectator, are founded the great, the awful, and respectable virtues; the virtues of self-denial, of self-government, of that command of the passions, which subjects all the movements of our nature to what our own dignity and honour, and the propriety of our own conduct, require.

As a farther illustration of the foregoing doctrine, Mr. Smith considers particularly the degrees of the different passions which are consistent with propriety, and endeavours to show, that, in every case, it is decent or indecent to express a passion strongly, according as mankind are disposed, or not disposed, to sympathize with it. It is unbecoming, for example, to express strongly any of those passions which arise from a certain condition of the body; because other men, who are not in the same condition, cannot be expected to sympathize with them. It is unbecoming to cry out with bodily pain; because the sympathy felt by the spectator bears no proportion to the acuteness of what is felt by the sufferer. The case is somewhat similar with those passions which take their origin from a particular turn or habit of the imagination.

In the case of the unsocial passions of hatred and resentment, the sympathy of the spectator is divided between the person who feels the passion, and the person who is the object of it. "We are concerned for both, and our fear for what the one may suffer damps our resentment for what the other has suffered."* Hence the imperfect degree in which we sym-

* [Ibid. Part I. sect. ii. chap. 3; sixth and later editions.]

pathize with such passions; and the propriety, when we are under their influence, of moderating their expression to a much greater degree than is required in the case of any other emotions.

The reverse of this takes place with respect to all the social and benevolent affections. The sympathy of the spectator with the person who feels them, coincides with his concern for the person who is the object of them. It is this redoubled sympathy which renders these affections so peculiarly becoming and agreeable.

The selfish emotions of grief and joy, when they are conceived on account of our own private good or bad fortune, hold a sort of middle place between our social and our unsocial passions. They are never so graceful as the one set, nor so odious as the other. Even when excessive, they are never so disagreeable as excessive resentment; because no opposite sympathy can ever interest us against them: and when most suitable to their objects, they are never so agreeable as impartial humanity and just benevolence; because no double sympathy can ever interest us for them.

After these general speculations concerning the propriety of actions, Mr. Smith examines how far the judgments of mankind concerning it are liable to be influenced, in particular cases, by the prosperous or the adverse circumstances of the agent. The scope of his reasoning on this subject is directed to show, (in opposition to the common opinion,) that when there is no envy in the case, our propensity to sympathize with joy is much stronger than our propensity to sympathize with sorrow: and, of consequence, that it is more easy to obtain the approbation of mankind in prosperity than in adversity. From the same principle he traces the origin of ambition, or of the desire of rank and pre-eminence; the great object of which passion is, to attain that situation which sets a man most in the view of general sympathy and attention, and gives him an easy empire over the affections of others.

Having finished the analysis of our sense of Propriety and of Impropriety, Mr. Smith proceeds to consider our sense of Merit

and Demerit; which he thinks has also a reference, in the first instance, not to our own characters, but to the characters of our neighbours. In explaining the origin of this part of our moral constitution, he avails himself of the same principle of sympathy, into which he resolves the sentiment of moral approbation.

The words *propriety* and *impropriety*, when applied to an affection of the mind, are used in this theory (as has been already observed) to express the suitableness or unsuitableness of the affection to its exciting *cause*. The words *merit* and *demerit* have always a reference (according to Mr. Smith) to the *effect* which the affection tends to produce. When the tendency of an affection is beneficial, the agent appears to us a proper object of reward; when it is hurtful, he appears the proper object of punishment.

The principles in our nature which most directly prompt us to reward and to punish, are gratitude and resentment. To say of a person, therefore, that he is deserving of reward or of punishment, is to say, in other words, that he is a proper object of gratitude or of resentment; or, which amounts to the same thing, that he is to some person or persons the object of a gratitude or of a resentment, which every reasonable man is ready to adopt and sympathize with.

It is, however, very necessary to observe, that we do not thoroughly sympathize with the gratitude of one man towards another, merely because this other has been the cause of his good fortune, unless he has been the cause of it from motives which we entirely go along with. Our sense, therefore, of the good desert of an action, is a compounded sentiment, made up of an indirect sympathy with the person to whom the action is beneficial, and of a direct sympathy with the affections and motives of the agent.—The same remark applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to our sense of demerit, or of ill-desert.

From these principles, it is inferred, that the only actions which appear to us deserving of reward, are actions of a beneficial tendency, proceeding from proper motives; the only actions which seem to deserve punishment, are actions of a

hurtful tendency, proceeding from improper motives. A mere want of beneficence exposes to no punishment; because the mere want of beneficence tends to do no real positive evil. A man, on the other hand, who is barely innocent, and contents himself with observing strictly the laws of justice with respect to others, can merit only, that his neighbours, in their turn, should observe religiously the same laws with respect to him.

These observations lead Mr. Smith to anticipate a little the subject of the second great division of his work, by a short inquiry into the origin of our sense of justice, *as applicable to our own conduct;* and also of our sentiments of remorse, and of good desert.

The origin of our sense of justice, as well as of all our other moral sentiments, he accounts for by means of the principle of sympathy. When I attend only to the feelings of my own breast, my own happiness appears to me of far greater consequence than of all the world besides. But I am conscious, that, in this excessive preference, other men cannot possibly sympathize with me, and that to them I appear only one of the crowd, in whom they are no more interested than in any other individual. If I wish, therefore, to secure their sympathy and approbation, (which, according to Mr. Smith, are the objects of the strongest desire of my nature,) it is necessary for me to regard my happiness, not in that light in which it appears to myself, but in that light in which it appears to mankind in general. If an unprovoked injury is offered to me, I know that society will sympathize with my resentment; but if I injure the interests of another, who never injured me, merely because they stand in the way of my own, I perceive evidently, that society will sympathize with *his* resentment, and that I shall become the object of general indignation.

When upon any occasion I am led by the violence of passion to overlook these considerations, and, in the case of a competition of interests, to act according to my own feelings, and not according to those of impartial spectators, I never fail to incur the punishment of remorse. When my passion is gratified, and I begin to reflect coolly on my conduct, I can no

longer enter into the motives from which it proceeded; it appears as improper to me as to the rest of the world; I lament the effects it has produced; I pity the unhappy sufferer whom I have injured; and I feel myself a just object of indignation to mankind. "Such," says Mr. Smith, "is the nature of that sentiment which is properly called remorse. It is made up of shame from the sense of the impropriety of past conduct; of grief for the effects of it; of pity for those who suffer by it; and of the dread and terror of punishment from the consciousness of the justly provoked resentment of all rational creatures."*

The opposite behaviour of him who, from proper motives, has performed a generous action, inspires, in a similar manner, the opposite sentiment of conscious merit, or of deserved reward.

The foregoing observations contain a general summary of Mr. Smith's principles with respect to the origin of our moral sentiments, in so far at least as they relate to the conduct of others. He acknowledges, at the same time, that the sentiments of which we are conscious, on particular occasions, do not always coincide with these principles; and that they are frequently modified by other considerations, very different from the propriety or impropriety of the affections of the agent, and also from the beneficial or hurtful tendency of these affections. The good or the bad consequences which accidentally follow from an action, and which, as they do not depend on the agent, ought undoubtedly, in point of justice, to have no influence on our opinion, either of the propriety or the merit of his conduct, scarcely ever fail to influence considerably our judgment with respect to both; by leading us to form a good or a bad opinion of the prudence with which the action was performed, and by animating our sense of the merit or demerit of his design. These facts, however, do not furnish any objections which are peculiarly applicable to Mr. Smith's theory; for whatever hypothesis we may adopt with respect to the origin of our moral perceptions, all men must acknowledge, that, in so far as

* [*Moral Sentiments*, Part II. sect. ii. chap. 2: sixth and later editions.]

the prosperous or the unprosperous event of an action depends on fortune or on accident, it ought neither to increase nor to diminish our moral approbation or disapprobation of the agent. And accordingly it has, in all ages of the world, been the complaint of moralists, that the actual sentiments of mankind should so often be in opposition to this equitable and indisputable maxim. In examining, therefore, this irregularity of our moral sentiments, Mr. Smith is to be considered, not as obviating an objection peculiar to his own system, but as removing a difficulty which is equally connected with every theory on the subject which has ever been proposed. So far as I know, he is the first philosopher who has been fully aware of the importance of the difficulty, and he has indeed treated it with great ability and success. The explanation which he gives of it is not warped in the least by any peculiarity in his own scheme; and, I must own, it appears to me to be the most solid and valuable improvement he has made in this branch of science. It is impossible to give any abstract of it in a sketch of this kind; and, therefore, I must content myself with remarking, that it consists of three parts. The first explains the causes of this irregularity of sentiment; the second, the extent of its influence; and the third, the important purposes to which it is subservient. His remarks on the last of these heads are more particularly ingenious and pleasing; as their object is to show, in opposition to what we should be disposed at first to apprehend, that when nature implanted the seeds of this irregularity in the human breast, her leading intention was, to promote the happiness and perfection of the species.

The remaining part of Mr. Smith's theory is employed in showing, in what manner *our sense of duty* comes to be formed, in consequence of an application to ourselves of the judgments we have previously passed on the conduct of others.

In entering upon this inquiry, which is undoubtedly the most important in the work, and for which the foregoing speculations are, according to Mr. Smith's theory, a necessary preparation, he begins with stating *the fact* concerning our con-

sciousness of merited praise or blame; and it must be owned, that the first aspect of the fact, as he himself states it, appears not very favourable to his principles. That the great object of a wise and virtuous man is not to act in such a manner as to obtain the actual approbation of those around him, but to act so as to render himself the *just* and *proper* object of their approbation, and that his satisfaction with his own conduct depends much more on the consciousness of *deserving* this approbation, than from that of really enjoying it, he candidly acknowledges; but still he insists, that although this may seem, at first view, to intimate the existence of some moral faculty which is not borrowed from without, our moral sentiments have always some secret reference, either to what are, or to what upon a certain condition would be, or to what we imagine ought to be, the sentiments of others; and that if it were possible, that a human creature could grow up to manhood without any communication with his own species, he could no more think of his own character, or of the propriety or demerit of his own sentiments and conduct, than of the beauty or deformity of his own face. There is indeed a tribunal within the breast, which is the supreme arbiter of all our actions, and which often mortifies us amidst the applause, and supports us under the censure of the world; yet still, he contends, that if we inquire into the origin of its institution, we shall find that its jurisdiction is, in a great measure, derived from the authority of that very tribunal whose decisions it so often and so justly reverses.

When we first come into the world, we, for some time, fondly pursue the impossible project of gaining the good-will and approbation of everybody. We soon, however, find, that this universal approbation is unattainable; that the most equitable conduct must frequently thwart the interests or the inclinations of particular persons, who will seldom have candour enough to enter into the propriety of our motives, or to see that this conduct, how disagreeable soever to them, is perfectly suitable to our situation. In order to defend ourselves from such partial judgments, we soon learn to set up in our own minds, a judge

between ourselves and those we live with. We conceive ourselves as acting in the presence of a person, who has no particular relation, either to ourselves, or to those whose interests are affected by our conduct; and we study to act in such a manner as to obtain the approbation of this supposed impartial spectator. It is only by consulting him that we can see whatever relates to ourselves in its proper shape and dimensions.

There are *two* different occasions, on which we examine our own conduct, and endeavour to view it in the light in which the impartial spectator would view it. First, when we are about to act; and, secondly, after we have acted. In both cases, our views are very apt to be partial.

When we are about to act, the eagerness of passion seldom allows us to consider what we are doing with the candour of an indifferent person. When the action is over, and the passions which prompted it have subsided, although we can undoubtedly enter into the sentiments of the indifferent spectator much more coolly than before, yet it is so disagreeable to us to think ill of ourselves, that we often purposely turn away our view from those circumstances which might render our judgment unfavourable. Hence that self-deceit which is the source of half the disorders of human life.

In order to guard ourselves against its delusions, nature leads us to form insensibly, by our continual observations upon the conduct of others, certain general rules concerning what is fit and proper either to be done or avoided. Some of their actions shock all our natural sentiments; and when we observe other people affected in the same manner with ourselves, we are confirmed in the belief, that our disapprobation was just. We naturally, therefore, lay it down as a general rule, that all such actions are to be avoided, as tending to render us odious, contemptible, or punishable; and we endeavour, by habitual reflection, to fix this general rule in our minds, in order to correct the misrepresentations of self-love, if we should ever be called on to act in similar circumstances. The man of furious resentment, if he were to listen to the dictates of that passion,

would perhaps regard the death of his enemy as but a small compensation for a trifling wrong. But his observations on the conduct of others have taught him how horrible such sanguinary revenges are; and he has impressed it on his mind as an invariable rule, to abstain from them upon all occasions. This rule preserves its authority with him, checks the impetuosity of his passion, and corrects the partial views which self-love suggests; although, if this had been the first time in which he considered such an action, he would undoubtedly have determined it to be just and proper, and what every impartial spectator would approve of. A regard to such general rules of morality, constitutes, according to Mr. Smith, what is properly called *the sense of duty.*

I before hinted, that Mr. Smith does not reject entirely from his system that principle of *utility*, of which the perception in any action or character constitutes, according to Mr. Hume, the sentiment of moral approbation. That no qualities of the mind are approved of as virtues, but such as are useful or agreeable, either to the person himself or to others, he admits to be a proposition that holds universally; and he also admits, that the sentiment of approbation with which we regard virtue, is enlivened by the perception of this utility, or, as he explains the fact, it is enlivened by our sympathy with the happiness of those to whom the utility extends: but still he insists, that it is not the view of this utility which is either the first or principal source of moral approbation.

To sum up the whole of his doctrine in a few words.—"When we approve of any character or action, the sentiments which we feel are derived from *four* different sources. First, we sympathize with the motives of the agent; secondly, we enter into the gratitude of those who receive the benefit of his actions; thirdly, we observe that his conduct has been agreeable to the general rules by which those two sympathies generally act; and, lastly, when we consider such actions as making a part of a system of behaviour which tends to promote the happiness either of the individual or of society, they appear to derive a beauty from this utility, not unlike that which we

ascribe to any well-contrived machine." These different sentiments, he thinks, exhaust completely, in every instance that can be supposed, the compounded sentiment of moral approbation. "After deducting," says he, "in any one particular case, all that must be acknowledged to proceed from some one or other of these four principles, I should be glad to know what remains; and I shall freely allow this overplus to be ascribed to a moral sense, or to any other peculiar faculty, provided anybody will ascertain precisely what this overplus is."*

Mr. Smith's opinion concerning the nature of Virtue is involved in his theory concerning the principle of Moral Approbation. The idea of virtue, he thinks, always implies the idea of propriety, or of the suitableness of the affection to the object which excites it; which suitableness, according to him, can be determined in no other way than by the sympathy of impartial spectators with the motives of the agent. But still he apprehends, that this description of virtue is incomplete; for although in every virtuous action propriety is an essential ingredient, it is not always the sole ingredient. Beneficent actions have in them another quality, by which they appear, not only to deserve approbation, but recompense, and excite a superior degree of esteem, arising from a double sympathy with the motives of the agent, and the gratitude of those who are the objects of his affection. In this respect, beneficence appears to him to be distinguished from the inferior virtues of prudence, vigilance, circumspection, temperance, constancy, firmness, which are always regarded with approbation, but which confer no merit. This distinction, he apprehends, has not been sufficiently attended to by moralists; the principles of some affording no explanation of the approbation we bestow on the inferior virtues; and those of others accounting as imperfectly for the peculiar excellency which the supreme virtue of beneficence is acknowledged to possess.[1]

Such are the outlines of Mr. Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, a work which, whatever opinion we may entertain of

* [*Moral Sentiments*, Part VII. sect. iii. chap. 3; sixth and later editions.]

[1] See Note C.

the justness of its conclusions, must be allowed by all to be a singular effort of invention, ingenuity, and subtilty. For my own part, I must confess, that it does not coincide with my notions concerning the foundation of Morals; but I am convinced, at the same time, that it contains a large mixture of important truth, and that, although the author has sometimes been misled by too great a desire of generalizing his principles, he has had the merit of directing the attention of philosophers to a view of human nature, which had formerly in a great measure escaped their notice. Of the great proportion of just and sound reasoning which the theory involves, its striking plausibility is a sufficient proof; for as the author himself has remarked, no system in morals can well gain our assent, if it does not border, in some respects, upon the truth. "A system of natural philosophy," he observes, "may appear very plausible, and be for a long time very generally received in the world, and yet have no foundation in nature; but the author who should assign as the cause of any natural sentiment, some principle which neither had any connexion with it, nor resembled any other principle which had some connexion, would appear absurd and ridiculous to the most injudicious and inexperienced reader."* The merit, however, of Mr. Smith's performance, does not rest here. No work, undoubtedly, can be mentioned, ancient or modern, which exhibits so complete a view of those facts with respect to our moral perceptions, which it is one great object of this branch of science to refer to their general laws, and upon this account, it well deserves the careful study of all whose taste leads them to prosecute similar inquiries. These facts are indeed frequently expressed in a language which involves the author's peculiar theories: but they are always presented in the most happy and beautiful lights, and it is easy for an attentive reader, by stripping them of hypothetical terms, to state them to himself with that logical precision, which, in such very difficult disquisitions, can alone conduct us with certainty to the truth.

It is proper to observe farther, that with the theoretical

* [Ibid. Part VII. sect. ii. chap. 4; sixth and later editions.]

doctrines of the book, there are everywhere interwoven, with singular taste and address, the purest and most elevated maxims concerning the practical conduct of life, and that it abounds throughout with interesting and instructive delineations of characters and manners. A considerable part of it too is employed in collateral inquiries, which, upon every hypothesis that can be formed concerning the foundation of morals, are of equal importance. Of this kind is the speculation formerly mentioned, with respect to the influence of fortune on our moral sentiments, and another speculation no less valuable, with respect to the influence of custom and fashion on the same part of our constitution.

The style in which Mr. Smith has conveyed the fundamental principles on which his theory rests, does not seem to me to be so perfectly suited to the subject as that which he employs on most other occasions. In communicating ideas which are extremely abstract and subtile, and about which it is hardly possible to reason correctly, without the scrupulous use of appropriated terms, he sometimes presents to us a choice of words, by no means strictly synonymous, so as to divert the attention from a precise and steady conception of his proposition; and a similar effect is, in other instances, produced by that diversity of forms which, in the course of his copious and seducing composition, the same truth insensibly assumes. When the subject of his work leads him to address the imagination and the heart, the variety and felicity of his illustrations, the richness and fluency of his eloquence, and the skill with which he wins the attention and commands the passions of his readers, leave him, among our English moralists, without a rival.

The *Dissertation on the Origin of Languages*, which now forms a part of the same volume with the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, was, I believe, first annexed to the second edition of that work. It is an essay of great ingenuity, and on which the author himself set a high value; but, in a general review of his publications, it deserves our attention less on account of

the opinions it contains, than as a specimen of a particular sort of inquiry, which, so far as I know, is entirely of modern origin, and which seems, in a peculiar degree, to have interested Mr. Smith's curiosity.* Something very similar to it may be traced in all his different works, whether moral, political, or literary; and on all these subjects he has exemplified it with the happiest success.

When, in such a period of society as that in which we live, we compare our intellectual acquirements, our opinions, manners, and institutions, with those which prevail among rude tribes, it cannot fail to occur to us as an interesting question, by what gradual steps the transition has been made from the first simple efforts of uncultivated nature, to a state of things so wonderfully artificial and complicated. Whence has arisen that systematical beauty which we admire in the structure of a cultivated language, that analogy which runs through the mixture of languages spoken by the most remote and unconnected nations, and those peculiarities by which they are all distinguished from each other? Whence the origin of the different sciences and of the different arts, and by what chain has the mind been led from their first rudiments to their last and most refined improvements? Whence the astonishing fabric of the political union, the fundamental principles which are common to all governments, and the different forms which civilized society has assumed in different ages of the world? On most of these subjects very little information is to be expected from history, for long before that stage of society when men begin to think of recording their transactions, many of the most important steps of their progress have been made. A few insulated facts may perhaps be collected from the casual observations of travellers, who have viewed the arrangements of rude nations; but nothing, it is evident, can be obtained in this way, which approaches to a regular and connected detail of human improvement.

In this want of direct evidence, we are under a necessity of supplying the place of fact by conjecture; and when we are

* [See the letter quoted in Note D.]

unable to ascertain how men have actually conducted themselves upon particular occasions, of considering in what manner they are likely to have proceeded, from the principles of their nature, and the circumstances of their external situation. In such inquiries, the detached facts which travels and voyages afford us, may frequently serve as landmarks to our speculations; and sometimes our conclusions *a priori*, may tend to confirm the credibility of facts, which, on a superficial view, appeared to be doubtful or incredible.

Nor are such theoretical views of human affairs subservient merely to the gratification of curiosity. In examining the history of mankind, as well as in examining the phenomena of the material world, when we cannot trace the process by which an event *has been* produced, it is often of importance to be able to shew how it *may have been* produced by natural causes. Thus, in the instance which has suggested these remarks, although it is impossible to determine with certainty what the steps were by which any particular language was formed, yet if we can shew, from the known principles of human nature, how all its various parts might gradually have arisen, the mind is not only to a certain degree satisfied, but a check is given to that indolent philosophy, which refers to a miracle, whatever appearances, both in the natural and moral worlds, it is unable to explain.

To this species of philosophical investigation, which has no appropriated name in our language, I shall take the liberty of giving the title of *Theoretical* or *Conjectural History*, an expression which coincides pretty nearly in its meaning with that of *Natural History*, as employed by Mr. Hume,[1] and with what some French writers have called *Histoire Raisonnée*.

The mathematical sciences, both pure and mixed, afford, in many of their branches, very favourable subjects for theoretical history; and a very competent judge, the late M. D'Alembert, has recommended this arrangement of their elementary principles, which is founded on the natural succession of inventions and discoveries, as the best adapted for interesting the curiosity

[1] See his *Natural History of Religion*.

and exercising the genius of students. The same author points out as a model a passage in Montucla's *History of Mathematics*, where an attempt is made to exhibit the gradual progress of philosophical speculation, from the first conclusions suggested by a general survey of the heavens, to the doctrines of Copernicus. It is somewhat remarkable, that a theoretical history of this very science, (in which we have, perhaps, a better opportunity than in any other instance whatever, of comparing the natural advances of the mind with the actual succession of hypothetical systems,) was one of Mr. Smith's earliest compositions, and is one of the very small number of his manuscripts which he did not destroy before his death.

I already hinted, that inquiries perfectly analogous to these may be applied to the modes of government, and to the municipal institutions which have obtained among different nations. It is but lately, however, that these important subjects have been considered in this point of view; the greater part of politicians before the time of Montesquieu having contented themselves with an historical statement of facts, and with a vague reference of laws to the wisdom of particular legislators, or to accidental circumstances, which it is now impossible to ascertain. Montesquieu, on the contrary, considered laws as originating chiefly from the circumstances of society, and attempted to account, from the changes in the condition of mankind, which take place in the different stages of their progress, for the corresponding alterations which their institutions undergo. It is thus, that in his occasional elucidations of the Roman jurisprudence, instead of bewildering himself among the erudition of scholiasts and of antiquaries, we frequently find him borrowing his lights from the most remote and unconnected quarters of the globe, and combining the casual observations of illiterate travellers and navigators, into a philosophical commentary on the history of law and of manners.

The advances made in this line of inquiry since Montesquieu's time have been great. Lord Kames, in his *Historical Law Tracts*, has given some excellent specimens of it, particularly in his *Essays on the History of Property and of Criminal Law*,

and many ingenious speculations of the same kind occur in the works of Mr. Millar.

In Mr. Smith's writings, whatever be the nature of his subject, he seldom misses an opportunity of indulging his curiosity, in tracing from the principles of human nature, or from the circumstances of society, the origin of the opinions and the institutions which he describes. I formerly mentioned a fragment concerning the *History of Astronomy* which he has left for publication, and I have heard him say more than once, that he had projected, in the earlier part of his life, a history of the other sciences on the same plan. In his *Wealth of Nations*, various disquisitions are introduced which have a like object in view, particularly the theoretical delineation he has given of the natural progress of opulence in a country, and his investigation of the causes which have inverted this order in the different countries of modern Europe. His lectures on jurisprudence seem, from the account of them formerly given, to have abounded in such inquiries.

I am informed by the same gentleman who favoured me with the account of Mr. Smith's lectures at Glasgow, that he had heard him sometimes hint an intention of writing a treatise upon the Greek and Roman Republics. "And after all that has been published on that subject, I am convinced," says he, "that the observations of Mr. Smith would have suggested many new and important views concerning the internal and domestic circumstances of those nations, which would have displayed their several systems of policy, in a light much less artificial than that in which they have hitherto appeared."

The same turn of thinking was frequently, in his social hours, applied to more familiar subjects; and the fanciful theories which, without the least affectation of ingenuity, he was continually starting upon all the common topics of discourse, gave to his conversation a novelty and variety that were quite inexhaustible. Hence too the minuteness and accuracy of his knowledge on many trifling articles which, in the course of his speculations, he had been led to consider from some new and interesting point of view, and of which his lively and cir-

cumstantial descriptions amused his friends the more, that he seemed to be habitually inattentive, in so remarkable a degree, to what was passing around him.

I have been led into these remarks by the *Dissertation on the Formation of Languages*, which exhibits a very beautiful specimen of theoretical history, applied to a subject equally curious and difficult. The analogy between the train of thinking from which it has taken its rise, and that which has suggested a variety of his other disquisitions, will, I hope, be a sufficient apology for the length of this digression, more particularly, as it will enable me to simplify the account which I am to give afterwards, of his inquiries concerning Political Economy.

I shall only observe farther on this head, that when different theoretical histories are proposed by different writers, of the progress of the human mind in any one line of exertion, these theories are not always to be understood as standing in opposition to each other. If the progress delineated in all of them be plausible, it is possible at least, that they may all have been realized, for human affairs never exhibit, in any two instances, a perfect uniformity. But whether they have been realized or no, is often a question of little consequence. In most cases, it is of more importance to ascertain the progress that is most simple, than the progress that is most agreeable to fact; for, paradoxical as the proposition may appear, it is certainly true, that the real progress is not always the most natural. It may have been determined by particular accidents, which are not likely again to occur, and which cannot be considered as forming any part of that general provision which nature has made for the improvement of the race.

In order to make some amends for the length (I am afraid I may add for the tediousness) of this Section, I shall subjoin to it an original letter of Mr. Hume's, addressed to Mr. Smith, soon after the publication of his *Theory*. It is strongly marked with that easy and affectionate pleasantry which distinguished Mr. Hume's epistolary correspondence, and is entitled to a place

in this *Memoir*, on account of its connexion with an important event of Mr. Smith's life, which soon after removed him into a new scene, and influenced, to a considerable degree, the subsequent course of his studies. The letter is dated from London, 12th April 1759.

"I give you thanks for the agreeable present of your *Theory*. Wedderburn and I made presents of our copies to such of our acquaintances as we thought good judges, and proper to spread the reputation of the book. I sent one to the Duke of Argyle, to Lord Lyttleton, Horace Walpole, Soame Jenyns, and Burke, an Irish gentleman, who wrote lately a very pretty treatise on the Sublime. Millar desired my permission to send one in your name to Dr. Warburton. I have delayed writing to you till I could tell you something of the success of the book, and could prognosticate with some probability, whether it should be finally damned to oblivion, or should be registered in the temple of immortality. Though it has been published only a few weeks, I think there appear already such strong symptoms, that I can almost venture to foretell its fate. It is, in short, this.—But I have been interrupted in my letter by a foolish impertinent visit of one who has lately come from Scotland. He tells me that the University of Glasgow intend to declare Rouet's office vacant, upon his going abroad with Lord Hope. I question not but you will have our friend Ferguson in your eye, in case another project for procuring him a place in the University of Edinburgh should fail. Ferguson has very much polished and improved his *Treatise on Refinement*,[1] and with some amendments it will make an admirable book, and discovers an elegant and a singular genius. The *Epigoniad*, I hope, will do, but it is somewhat up-hill work. As I doubt not but you consult the Reviews sometimes at present, you will see in the *Critical Review* a letter upon that poem, and I desire you to employ your conjectures in finding out the author. Let me see a sample of your skill in knowing hands by your guessing at the person. I am afraid of

[1] Published afterwards under the title of *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*.

Lord Kames's *Law Tracts.* A man might as well think of making a fine sauce by a mixture of wormwood and aloes, as an agreeable composition by joining metaphysics and Scotch law. However, the book, I believe, has merit, though few people will take the pains of diving into it. But, to return to your book, and its success in this town, I must tell you.—A plague of interruptions! I ordered myself to be denied, and yet here is one that has broke in upon me again. He is a man of letters, and we have had a good deal of literary conversation. You told me that you was curious of literary anecdotes, and therefore I shall inform you of a few that have come to my knowledge. I believe I have mentioned to you already Helvetius's book *De l'Esprit.* It is worth your reading, not for its philosophy, which I do not highly value, but for its agreeable composition. I had a letter from him a few days ago, wherein he tells me that my name was much oftener in the manuscript, but that the censor of books at Paris obliged him to strike it out. Voltaire has lately published a small work called *Candide, ou l'Optimisme.* I shall give you a detail of it.—But what is all this to my book? say you. My dear Mr. Smith, have patience: compose yourself to tranquillity: shew yourself a philosopher in practice as well as profession: think on the emptiness, and rashness, and futility of the common judgments of men: how little they are regulated by reason in any subject, much more in philosophical subjects, which so far exceed the comprehension of the vulgar.

> '. . . . . Non si quid turbida Roma,
> Elevet, accedas: examenve improbum in illa
> Castiges trutina: nec te quæsiveris extra.'

A wise man's kingdom is his own breast; or, if he ever looks farther, it will only be to the judgment of a select few, who are free from prejudices, and capable of examining his work. Nothing indeed can be a stronger presumption of falsehood than the approbation of the multitude; and Phocion, you know, always suspected himself of some blunder, when he was attended with the applauses of the populace.

"Supposing, therefore, that you have duly prepared yourself for the worst by all these reflections, I proceed to tell you the melancholy news, that your book has been very unfortunate, for the public seem disposed to applaud it extremely. It was looked for by the foolish people with some impatience, and the mob of *literati* are beginning already to be very loud in its praises. Three bishops called yesterday at Millar's shop in order to buy copies, and to ask questions about the author. The Bishop of Peterborough said he had passed the evening in a company where he heard it extolled above all books in the world. The Duke of Argyle is more decisive than he uses to be in its favour. I suppose he either considers it as an exotic, or thinks the author will be serviceable to him in the Glasgow elections. Lord Lyttleton says, that Robertson, and Smith, and Bower, are the glories of English literature. Oswald protests he does not know whether he has reaped more instruction or entertainment from it. But you may easily judge what reliance can be put on his judgment, who has been engaged all his life in public business, and who never sees any faults in his friends. Millar exults and brags that two-thirds of the edition are already sold, and that he is now sure of success. You see what a son of the earth that is, to value books only by the profit they bring him. In that view, I believe it may prove a very good book.

"Charles Townsend, who passes for the cleverest fellow in England, is so taken with the performance, that he said to Oswald he would put the Duke of Buccleuch under the author's care, and would make it worth his while to accept of that charge. As soon as I heard this, I called on him twice, with a view of talking with him about the matter, and of convincing him of the propriety of sending that young nobleman to Glasgow: for I could not hope, that he could offer you any terms which would tempt you to renounce your Professorship; but I missed him. Mr. Townsend passes for being a little uncertain in his resolutions, so perhaps you need not build much on this sally.

"In recompence for so many mortifying things, which no-

thing but truth could have extorted from me, and which I could easily have multiplied to a greater number, I doubt not but you are so good a Christian as to return good for evil; and to flatter my vanity by telling me, that all the godly in Scotland abuse me for my account of John Knox and the Reformation. I suppose you are glad to see my paper end, and that I am obliged to conclude with—your humble servant,

"DAVID HUME."

SECTION III.

FROM THE PUBLICATION OF THE THEORY OF MORAL SENTIMENTS TILL THAT OF THE WEALTH OF NATIONS.

AFTER the publication of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Mr. Smith remained four years at Glasgow, discharging his official duties with unabated vigour, and with increasing reputation. During that time, the plan of his lectures underwent a considerable change. His ethical doctrines, of which he had now published so valuable a part, occupied a much smaller portion of the course than formerly; and accordingly, his attention was naturally directed to a more complete illustration of the principles of Jurisprudence and of Political Economy.

To this last subject, his thoughts appear to have been occasionally turned from a very early period of life. It is probable, that the uninterrupted friendship he had always maintained with his old companion Mr. Oswald, had some tendency to encourage him in prosecuting this branch of his studies; and the publication of Mr. Hume's *Political Discourses* in the year 1752, could not fail to confirm him in those liberal views of commercial policy which had already opened to him in the course of his own inquiries. His long residence in one of the most enlightened mercantile towns in this island, and the habits of intimacy in which he lived with the most respectable of its inhabitants, afforded him an opportunity of deriving what commercial information he stood in need of from the best sources; and it is a circumstance no less honourable to their liberality than to his talents, that notwithstanding the reluctance so common among men of business to listen to the conclusions of

mere speculation, and the direct opposition of his leading principles to all the old maxims of trade, he was able, before he quitted his situation in the University, to rank some very eminent merchants in the number of his proselytes.[1]

Among the students who attended his lectures, and whose minds were not previously warped by prejudice, the progress of his opinions, it may be reasonably supposed, was much more rapid. It was this class of his friends accordingly that first adopted his system with eagerness, and diffused a knowledge of its fundamental principles over this part of the kingdom.

Towards the end of 1763, Mr. Smith received an invitation from Mr. Charles Townsend to accompany the Duke of Buccleuch on his travels; and the liberal terms in which the proposal was made to him, added to the strong desire he had felt of visiting the Continent of Europe, induced him to resign his office at Glasgow. With the connexion which he was led to form in consequence of this change in his situation, he had reason to be satisfied in an uncommon degree, and he always spoke of it with pleasure and gratitude. To the public, it was not perhaps a change equally fortunate, as it interrupted that studious leisure for which nature seems to have destined him, and in which alone he could have hoped to accomplish those literary projects which had flattered the ambition of his youthful genius.

The alteration, however, which, from this period, took place in his habits, was not without its advantages. He had hitherto lived chiefly within the walls of a University, and although to a mind like his, the observation of human nature on the smallest scale is sufficient to convey a tolerably just conception of what passes on the great theatre of the world, yet it is not to be doubted that the variety of scenes through which he afterwards passed, must have enriched his mind with many new ideas, and corrected many of those misapprehensions of life and manners which the best descriptions of them can scarcely fail to convey. But whatever were the lights that his

[1] I mention this fact on the respectable authority of James Ritchie, Esq., of Glasgow.

travels afforded to him as a student of human nature, they were probably useful in a still greater degree, in enabling him to perfect that system of Political Economy, of which he had already delivered the principles in his lectures at Glasgow, and which it was now the leading object of his studies to prepare for the public. The coincidence between some of these principles and the distinguishing tenets of the French Economists, who were at that very time in the height of their reputation, and the intimacy in which he lived with some of the leaders of that sect, could not fail to assist him in methodizing and digesting his speculations; while the valuable collection of facts, accumulated by the zealous industry of their numerous adherents, furnished him with ample materials for illustrating and confirming his theoretical conclusions.

After leaving Glasgow, Mr. Smith joined the Duke of Buccleuch at London early in the year 1764, and set out with him for the Continent in the month of March following. At Dover they were met by Sir James Macdonald, who accompanied them to Paris, and with whom Mr. Smith laid the foundation of a friendship, which he always mentioned with great sensibility, and of which he often lamented the short duration. The panegyrics with which the memory of this accomplished and amiable person has been honoured by so many distinguished characters in the different countries of Europe, are a proof how well fitted his talents were to command general admiration. The esteem in which his abilities and learning were held by Mr. Smith, is a testimony to his extraordinary merit of still superior value. Mr. Hume, too, seems in this instance to have partaken of his friend's enthusiasm. "Were you and I together," says he in a letter to Mr. Smith, "we should shed tears at present for the death of poor Sir James Macdonald. We could not possibly have suffered a greater loss than in that valuable young man."

In this first visit to Paris, the Duke of Buccleuch and Mr. Smith employed only ten or twelve days,[1] after which they

[1] The day after his arrival at Paris, Mr. Smith sent a formal resignation of his Professorship to the Rector of the University of Glasgow. "I never was

proceeded to Toulouse, where they fixed their residence for eighteen months, and where, in addition to the pleasure of an agreeable society, Mr. Smith had an opportunity of correcting and extending his information concerning the internal policy of France, by the intimacy in which he lived with some of the principal persons of the Parliament.

From Toulouse they went, by a pretty extensive tour, through the south of France to Geneva. Here they passed two months. The late Earl Stanhope, for whose learning and worth Mr. Smith entertained a sincere respect, was then an inhabitant of that Republic.

About Christmas 1765, they returned to Paris, and remained there till October following. The society in which Mr. Smith spent these ten months, may be conceived from the advantages he enjoyed, in consequence of the recommendations of Mr. Hume. Turgot, Quesnai, [Morellet,*] Necker, D'Alembert, Helvetius, Marmontel, Madame Riccoboni, were among the number of his acquaintances, and some of them he continued ever afterwards to reckon among his friends. From Madame D'Enville, the respectable mother of the late excellent and much lamented

more anxious," says he in the conclusion of this letter, " for the good of the College than at this moment; and I sincerely wish, that whoever is my successor, may not only do credit to the office by his abilities, but be a comfort to the very excellent men with whom he is likely to spend his life, by the probity of his heart, and the goodness of his temper."

The following extract from the records of the University, which follows immediately after Mr. Smith's letter of resignation, is at once a testimony to his assiduity as a professor, and a proof of the just sense which that learned body entertained of the talents and worth of the colleague they had lost:—

" The meeting accept of Dr. Smith's resignation, in terms of the above letter, and the office of Professor of Moral Philosophy in this University is there fore hereby declared to be vacant. The University, at the same time, cannot help expressing their sincere regret at the removal of Dr. Smith, whose distinguished probity and amiable qualities procured him the esteem and affection of his colleagues; and whose uncommon genius, great abilities, and extensive learning, did so much honour to this society; his elegant and ingenious *Theory of Moral Sentiments* having recommended him to the esteem of men of taste and literature throughout Europe. His happy talent in illustrating abstracted subjects, and faithful assiduity in communicating useful knowledge, distinguished him as a professor, and at once afforded the greatest pleasure and the most important instruction to the youth under his care."

* [*Author's last additions:* but see Note E.]

Duke of Rochefoucauld,[1] he received many attentions, which he always recollected with particular gratitude.

It is much to be regretted that he preserved no journal of

[1] The following letter, which has been very accidentally preserved, while it serves as a memorial of Mr. Smith's connexion with the family of Rochefoucauld, is so expressive of the virtuous and liberal mind of the writer, that I am persuaded it will give pleasure to the Society to record it in their *Transactions*.

"PARIS, 3 *Mars* 1778.

"Le desir de se rappeller à votre souvenir, Monsieur, quand on a eu l'honneur de vous connoître, doit vous paroître fort naturel; permettez que nous saisissions pour cela, ma Mère et moi, l'occasion d'une édition nouvelle des *Maximes de la Rochefoucauld*, dont nous prenons la liberté de vous offrir un exemplaire. Vous voyez que nous n'avons point de rancune, puisque le mal que vous avez dit de lui dans la *Théorie des Sentimens Moraux*, ne nous empêche point de vous envoyer ce même ouvrage. Il s'en est même fallu de peu que je ne fisse encore plus, car j'avois eu peut-être la témérité d'entreprendre une traduction de votre *Théorie;* mais comme je venois de terminer la première partie, j'ai vu paroître la traduction de M. l'Abbé Blavet, et j'ai été forcé de renoncer au plaisir que j'aurois eu de faire passer dans ma langue un des meilleurs ouvrages de la vôtre." (See Note F.)

"Il auroit bien fallu pour lors entreprendre une justification de mon grandpère. Peut-être n'auroit-il pas été difficile, premièrement de l'excuser, en disant, qu'il avoit toujours vu les hommes à la Cour, et dans la guerre civile, *deux théatres sur lesquels ils sont certainement plus mauvais qu'ailleurs;* et ensuite de justifier par la conduite personelle de l'auteur, les principes qui sont certainement trop généralisés dans son ouvrage. Il a pris la partie pour le tout; et parceque les gens qu'il avoit eu le plus sous les yeux étoient animés par *l'amour propre*, il en a fait le mobile général de tous les hommes. Au reste, quoique son ouvrage mérite à certains égards d'être combattu, il est cependant estimable même pour le fond, et beaucoup pour la forme.

"Permettez-moi de vous demander, si nous aurons bientôt une édition complette des œuvres de votre illustre ami M. Hume? Nous l'avons sincèrement regretté.

"Recevez, je vous supplie, l'expression sincère de tous les sentimens d'estime et d'attachement avec lesquels j'ai l'honneur d'être, Monsieur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

"LE DUC DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD."

Mr. Smith's last intercourse with this excellent man was in the year 1789, when he informed him by means of a friend who happened to be then at Paris, that in the future editions of his *Theory* the name of Rochefoucauld should be no longer classed with that of Mandeville. In the enlarged edition accordingly of that work, published a short time before his death, he has suppressed his censure of the author of the *Maximes*, who seems indeed (however exceptionable many of his principles may be) to have been actuated, both in his life and writings, by motives very different from those of Mandeville. The real scope of these maxims is placed, I think, in a just light by the ingenious author of the *Notice* prefixed to the edition of them published at Paris in 1778.

this very interesting period of his history; and such was his aversion to write letters, that I scarcely suppose any memorial of it exists in his correspondence with his friends. The extent and accuracy of his memory, in which he was equalled by few, made it of little consequence to himself to record in writing what he heard or saw; and from his anxiety before his death to destroy all the papers in his possession, he seems to have wished that no materials should remain for his biographers, but what were furnished by the lasting monuments of his genius, and the exemplary worth of his private life.

The satisfaction he enjoyed in the conversation of Turgot may be easily imagined. Their opinions on the most essential points of Political Economy were the same; and they were both animated by the same zeal for the best interests of mankind. The favourite studies, too, of both, had directed their inquiries to subjects on which the understandings of the ablest and the best informed are liable to be warped, to a great degree, by prejudice and passion; and on which, of consequence, a coincidence of judgment is peculiarly gratifying. We are told by one of the biographers of Turgot, that after his retreat from the ministry, he occupied his leisure in a philosophical correspondence with some of his old friends; and, in particular, that various letters on important subjects passed between him and Mr. Smith. I take notice of this anecdote chiefly as a proof of the intimacy which was understood to have subsisted between them; for in other respects, the anecdote seems to me to be somewhat doubtful. It is scarcely to be supposed, that Mr. Smith would destroy the letters of such a correspondent as Turgot; and still less probable, that such an intercourse was carried on between them without the knowledge of any of Mr. Smith's friends. From some inquiries that have been made at Paris by a gentleman of this Society since Mr. Smith's death, I have reason to believe, that no evidence of the correspondence exists among the papers of M. Turgot, and that the whole story has taken its rise from a report suggested by the knowledge of their former intimacy. This circumstance I think it of importance to mention, because a good deal of curiosity has been

excited by the passage in question, with respect to the fate of the supposed letters.

Mr. Smith was also well known to M. Quesnai, the profound and original author of the *Economical Table;* a man (according to Mr. Smith's account of him) "of the greatest modesty and simplicity;" and whose system of Political Economy he has pronounced, "with all its imperfections," to be "the nearest approximation to the truth that has yet been published on the principles of that very important science."* If he had not been prevented by Quesnai's death, Mr. Smith had once an intention (as he told me himself) to have inscribed to him his *Wealth of Nations.*

It was not, however, merely the distinguished men who about this period fixed so splendid an era in the literary history of France, that excited Mr. Smith's curiosity while he remained in Paris. His acquaintance with the polite literature both of ancient and modern times was extensive; and amidst his various other occupations, he had never neglected to cultivate a taste for the Fine Arts;—less, it is probable, with a view to the peculiar enjoyments they convey, (though he was by no means without sensibility to their beauties,) than on account of their connexion with the general principles of the human mind, to an examination of which they afford the most pleasing of all avenues. To those who speculate on this very delicate subject, a comparison of the modes of taste that prevail among different nations, affords a valuable collection of facts; and Mr. Smith, who was always disposed to ascribe to custom and fashion their full share in regulating the opinions of mankind with respect to beauty, may naturally be supposed to have availed himself of every opportunity which a foreign country afforded him of illustrating his former theories.

Some of his peculiar notions, too, with respect to the imitative arts, seem to have been much confirmed by his observations while abroad. In accounting for the pleasure we receive from these arts, it had early occurred to him as a fundamental principle, that a very great part of it arises from the difficulty of the imitation; a princi[redacted] was probably suggested to

* [*Wealth of Nations*, Book [redacted] Vol. III. p. 27, tenth edition.]

him by that of the *difficulté surmontée*, by which some French critics had attempted to explain the effect of versification and of rhyme.[1] This principle Mr. Smith pushed to the greatest possible length, and referred to it, with singular ingenuity, a great variety of phenomena in all the different fine arts. It led him, however, to some conclusions, which appear, at first view at least, not a little paradoxical; and I cannot help thinking, that it warped his judgment in many of the opinions which he was accustomed to give on the subject of poetry.

The principles of dramatic composition had more particularly attracted his attention; and the history of the theatre, both in ancient and modern times, had furnished him with some of the most remarkable facts on which his theory of the imitative arts was founded. From this theory it seemed to follow as a consequence, that the same circumstances which, in tragedy, give to blank verse an advantage over prose, should give to rhyme an advantage over blank verse; and Mr. Smith had always inclined to that opinion. Nay, he had gone so far as to extend the same doctrine to comedy; and to regret that those excellent pictures of life and manners which the English stage affords, had not been executed after the model of the French school. The admiration with which he regarded the great dramatic authors of France tended to confirm him in these opinions; and this admiration (resulting originally from the general character of his taste, which delighted more to remark that pliancy of genius which accommodates itself to established rules than to wonder at the bolder flights of an undisciplined imagination) was increased to a great degree, when he saw the beauties that had struck him in the closet, heightened by the utmost perfection of theatrical exhibition. In the last years of his life, he sometimes amused himself, at a leisure hour, in supporting his theoretical conclusions on these subjects, by the facts which his subsequent studies and observations had suggested; and he intended, if he had lived, to have prepared the result of these labours for the press. Of this work, he has left for publication a short fragment; but he had not proceeded

[1] See the Preface to Voltaire's *Oedipe*, edition of 1729.

far enough to apply his doctrine to versification and to the theatre. As his notions, however, with respect to these were a favourite topic of his conversation, and were intimately connected with his general principles of criticism, it would have been improper to pass them over in this sketch of his life; and I even thought it proper to detail them at greater length than the comparative importance of the subject would have justified, if he had carried his plans into execution. Whether his love of system, added to his partiality for the French drama, may not have led him, in this instance, to generalize a little too much his conclusions, and to overlook some peculiarities in the language and versification of that country, I shall not take upon me to determine.

In October 1766, the Duke of Buccleuch returned to London. His Grace, to whom I am indebted for several particulars in the foregoing narrative, will, I hope, forgive the liberty I take in transcribing one paragraph in his own words:—"In October 1766, we returned to London, after having spent near three years together, without the slightest disagreement or coolness; —on my part, with every advantage that could be expected from the society of such a man. We continued to live in friendship till the hour of his death; and I shall always remain with the impression of having lost a friend whom I loved and respected, not only for his great talents, but for every private virtue."

The retirement in which Mr. Smith passed his next ten years, formed a striking contrast to the unsettled mode of life he had been for some time accustomed to, but was so congenial to his natural disposition, and to his first habits, that it was with the utmost difficulty he was ever persuaded to leave it. During the whole of this period (with the exception of a few visits to Edinburgh and London) he remained with his mother at Kirkaldy; occupied habitually in intense study, but unbending his mind at times in the company of some of his old school-fellows, whose "sober wishes" had attached them to the place of their birth. In the society of such men, Mr. Smith delighted; and to them he was endeared, not only by his

simple and unassuming manners, but by the perfect knowledge they all possessed of those domestic virtues which had distinguished him from his infancy.

Mr. Hume, who (as he tells us himself) considered "a town as the true scene for a man of letters," made many attempts to seduce him from his retirement. In a letter, dated in 1772, he urges him to pass some time with him in Edinburgh. "I shall not take any excuse from your state of health, which I suppose only a subterfuge invented by indolence and love of solitude. Indeed, my dear Smith, if you continue to hearken to complaints of this nature, you will cut yourself out entirely from human society, to the great loss of both parties." In another letter, dated in 1769, from his house in James's Court, (which commanded a prospect of the Frith of Forth, and of the opposite coast of Fife,) "I am glad," says he, "to have come within sight of you; but as I would also be within speaking terms of you, I wish we could concert measures for that purpose. I am mortally sick at sea, and regard with horror and a kind of hydrophobia the great gulf that lies between us. I am also tired of travelling, as much as you ought naturally to be of staying at home. I therefore propose to you to come hither, and pass some days with me in this solitude. I want to know what you have been doing, and propose to exact a rigorous account of the method in which you have employed yourself during your retreat. I am positive you are in the wrong in many of your speculations especially where you have the misfortune to differ from me. All these are reasons for our meeting, and I wish you would make me some reasonable proposal for that purpose. There is no habitation in the island of Inchkeith, otherwise I should challenge you to meet me on that spot, and neither of us ever to leave the place, till we were fully agreed on all points of controversy. I expect General Conway here to-morrow, whom I shall attend to Roseneath, and I shall remain there a few days. On my return, I hope to find a letter from you, containing a bold acceptance of this defiance."

At length (in the beginning of the year 1776) Mr. Smith

accounted to the world for his long retreat, by the publication of his *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations.* A letter of congratulation on this event, from Mr. Hume, is now before me. It is dated 1st April 1776, (about six months before Mr. Hume's death,) and discovers an amiable solicitude about his friend's literary fame. "*Euge! Belle!* Dear Mr. Smith,—I am much pleased with your performance, and the perusal of it has taken me from a state of great anxiety. It was a work of so much expectation, by yourself, by your friends, and by the public, that I trembled for its appearance; but am now much relieved. Not but that the reading of it necessarily requires so much attention, and the public is disposed to give so little, that I shall still doubt for some time of its being at first very popular. But it has depth and solidity and acuteness, and is so much illustrated by curious facts, that it must at last take the public attention. It is probably much improved by your last abode in London. If you were here at my fireside, I should dispute some of your principles. . . . . But these, and a hundred other points, are fit only to be discussed in conversation. I hope it will be soon; for I am in a very bad state of health, and cannot afford a long delay."

Of a book which is now so universally known as *The Wealth of Nations,* it might be considered perhaps as superfluous to give a particular analysis; and, at any rate, the limits of this Essay make it impossible for me to attempt it at present. A few remarks, however, on the object and tendency of the work may, I hope, be introduced without impropriety. The history of a philosopher's life can contain little more than the history of his speculations; and in the case of such an author as Mr. Smith, whose studies were systematically directed from his youth to subjects of the last importance to human happiness, a review of his writings, while it serves to illustrate the peculiarities of his genius, affords the most faithful picture of his character as a man.

SECTION IV.

OF THE INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE AND CAUSES OF THE WEALTH OF NATIONS.[1]

An historical view of the different forms under which human affairs have appeared in different ages and nations, naturally suggests the question, Whether the experience of former times may not now furnish some general principles to enlighten and direct the policy of future legislators? The discussion, however, to which this question leads, is of singular difficulty: as it requires an accurate analysis of by far the most complicated class of phenomena that can possibly engage our attention, those which result from the intricate and often the imperceptible mechanism of political society;—a subject of observation which seems, at first view, so little commensurate to our faculties, that it has been generally regarded with the same passive emotions of wonder and submission, with which, in the material world, we survey the effects produced by the mysterious and uncontrollable operation of physical causes. It is fortunate that upon this, as upon many other occasions, the difficulties which had long baffled the efforts of solitary genius begin to appear less formidable to the united exertions of the race; and that in proportion as the experience and the reasonings of different individuals are brought to bear upon the same objects, and are combined in such a manner as to illustrate and to limit each other, the science of Politics assumes more and more that systematical form which encourages and aids the labours of future inquirers.

[1] The length to which this Memoir has already extended, together with some other reasons which it is unnecessary to mention here, have induced me, in printing the following Section, to confine myself to a much more general view of the subject than I once intended.—See Note G.

In prosecuting the science of Politics on this plan, little assistance is to be derived from the speculations of ancient philosophers, the greater part of whom, in their political inquiries, confined their attention to a comparison of the different forms of government, and to an examination of the provisions they made for perpetuating their own existence, and for extending the glory of the State. It was reserved for modern times to investigate those universal principles of justice and of expediency, which ought, under every form of government, to regulate the social order; and of which the object is, to make as equitable a distribution as possible, among all the different members of a community, of the advantages arising from the political union.

The invention of printing was perhaps necessary to prepare the way for these researches. In those departments of literature and of science, where genius finds within itself the materials of its labours; in poetry, in pure geometry, and in some branches of moral philosophy;—the ancients have not only laid the foundations on which we are to build, but have left great and finished models for our imitation. But in physics, where our progress depends on an immense collection of facts, and on a combination of the accidental lights daily struck out in the innumerable walks of observation and experiment; and in politics, where the materials of our theories are equally scattered, and are collected and arranged with still greater difficulty, the means of communication afforded by the press, have, in the course of two centuries, accelerated the progress of the human mind, far beyond what the most sanguine hopes of our predecessors could have imagined.

The progress already made in this science, inconsiderable as it is in comparison of what may be yet expected, has been sufficient to show, that the happiness of mankind depends, not on the share which the people possesses, directly or indirectly, in the enactment of laws, but on the equity and expediency of the laws that are enacted. The share which the people possesses in the government is interesting chiefly to the small number of men whose object is the attainment of political

importance; but the equity and expediency of the laws are interesting to every member of the community; and more especially to those whose personal insignificance leaves them no encouragement, but what they derive from the general spirit of the government under which they live.

It is evident, therefore, that the most important branch of political science is that which has for its object to ascertain the philosophical principles of jurisprudence; or (as Mr. Smith expresses it) to ascertain "the general principles which ought to run through and be the foundation of the laws of all nations."[1] In countries where the prejudices of the people are widely at variance with these principles, the political liberty which the constitution bestows, only furnishes them with the means of accomplishing their own ruin: And if it were possible to suppose these principles completely realized in any system of laws, the people would have little reason to complain, that they were not immediately instrumental in their enactment. The only infallible criterion of the excellence of any constitution is to be found in the detail of its municipal code; and the value which wise men set on political freedom, arises chiefly from the facility it is supposed to afford, for the introduction of those legislative improvements which the general interests of the community recommend; [combined with the security it provides in the light and spirit of the people, for the pure and equal administration of justice.*]—I cannot help adding, that the capacity of a people to exercise political rights with utility to themselves and to their country, presupposes a diffusion of knowledge and of good morals, which can only result from the previous operation of laws favourable to industry, to order, and to freedom.

Of the truth of these remarks, enlightened politicians seem now to be in general convinced, for the most celebrated works which have been produced in the different countries of Europe, during the last thirty years, by Smith, Quesnai, Turgot, Campomanes, Beccaria, and others, have aimed at the improvement

[1] See the conclusion of his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. [Part VII. sect. iv.]

* [From *Author's last additions.*]

of society,—not by delineating plans of new constitutions, but by enlightening the policy of actual legislators. Such speculations, while they are more essentially and more extensively useful than any others, have no tendency to unhinge established institutions, or to inflame the passions of the multitude. The improvements they recommend are to be effected by means too gradual and slow in their operation, to warm the imaginations of any but of the speculative few, and in proportion as they are adopted, they consolidate the political fabric, and enlarge the basis upon which it rests.

To direct the policy of nations with respect to one most important class of its laws, those which form its system of Political Economy, is the great aim of Mr. Smith's *Inquiry:* And he has unquestionably had the merit of presenting to the world, the most comprehensive and perfect work that has yet appeared, on the general principles of any branch of legislation. The example which he has set will be followed, it is to be hoped, in due time, by other writers, for whom the internal policy of states furnishes many other subjects of discussion no less curious and interesting, and may accelerate the progress of that science which Lord Bacon has so well described in the following passage:—" Finis et scopus quem leges intueri, atque ad quem jussiones et sanctiones suas dirigere debent, non alius est, quam ut cives feliciter degant: id fiet, si pietate et religione recte instituti; moribus honesti; armis adversus hostes externos tuti; legum auxilio adversus seditiones et privatas injurias muniti; imperio et magistratibus obsequentes; copiis et opibus locupletes et florentes fuerint. . . . Certe cognitio ista ad viros civiles proprie spectat; qui optime nôrunt, quid ferat societas humana, quid salus populi, quid æquitas naturalis, quid gentium mores, quid rerumpublicarum formæ diversæ: ideoque possint de legibus, ex principiis et præceptis tam æquitatis naturalis, quam politices decernere. Quamobrem id nunc agatur, ut fontes justitiæ et utilitatis publicæ petantur, et in singulis juris partibus character quidam et idea justi exhibeatur, ad quam particularium regnorum et rerumpublicarum leges probare, atque inde emendationem moliri, quisque, cui hoc

cordi erit et curæ, possit."* The enumeration contained in the foregoing passage, of the different objects of law, coincides very nearly with that given by Mr. Smith in the conclusion of his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, and the precise aim of the political speculations which he then announced, and of which he afterwards published so valuable a part in his *Wealth of Nations*, was to ascertain the general principles of justice and of expediency, which ought to guide the institutions of legislators on these important articles;—in the words of Lord Bacon, to ascertain those *leges legum*, "ex quibus informatio peti possit, quid in singulis legibus bene aut perperam positum aut constitutum sit."†

The branch of legislation which Mr. Smith has made choice of as the subject of his work, naturally leads me to remark a very striking contrast between the spirit of ancient and of modern policy in respect to the Wealth of Nations.[1] The great object of the former was to counteract the love of money and a taste for luxury, by positive institutions; and to maintain in the great body of the people, habits of frugality and a severity of manners. The decline of states is uniformly ascribed by the philosophers and historians, both of Greece and Rome, to the influence of riches on national character; and the laws of Lycurgus, which, during a course of ages, banished the precious metals from Sparta, are proposed by many of them as the most perfect model of legislation devised by human wisdom. How opposite to this is the doctrine of modern politicians! Far from considering poverty as an advantage to a state, their great aim is to open new sources of national opulence, and to animate the activity of all classes of the people by a taste for the comforts and accommodations of life.

One principal cause of this difference between the spirit of ancient and of modern policy, may be found in the difference between the sources of national wealth in ancient and in modern times. In ages when commerce and manufactures were yet in their infancy, and among states constituted like

* [*De Augm. Scient.* Lib. VIII. c. iii.]
† [Ibid.]
[1] *Science de la Legislation*, par le Chev. Filangieri, Liv. I. chap. xiii.

most of the ancient republics, a sudden influx of riches from abroad was justly dreaded as an evil, alarming to the morals, to the industry, and to the freedom of a people. So different, however, is the case at present, that the most wealthy nations are those where the people are the most laborious, and where they enjoy the greatest degree of liberty. Nay, it was the general diffusion of wealth among the lower orders of men, which first gave birth to the spirit of independence in modern Europe, and which has produced under some of its governments, and especially under our own, a more equal diffusion of freedom and of happiness than took place under the most celebrated constitutions of antiquity.

Without this diffusion of wealth among the lower orders, the important effects resulting from the invention of printing would have been extremely limited, for a certain degree of ease and independence is necessary to inspire men with the desire of knowledge, and to afford them the leisure which is requisite for acquiring it; and it is only by the rewards which such a state of society holds up to industry and ambition, that the selfish passions of the multitude can be interested in the intellectual improvement of their children. The extensive propagation of light and refinement arising from the influence of the press, aided by the spirit of commerce, seems to be the remedy provided by nature, against the fatal effects which would otherwise be produced, by the subdivision of labour accompanying the progress of the mechanical arts: nor is anything wanting to make the remedy effectual, but wise institutions to facilitate general instruction, and to adapt the education of individuals to the stations they are to occupy. The mind of the artist [artisan ?], which, from the limited sphere of his activity, would sink below the level of the peasant or the savage, might receive in infancy the means of intellectual enjoyment, and the seeds of moral improvement; and even the insipid uniformity of his professional engagements, by presenting no object to awaken his ingenuity or to distract his attention, might leave him at liberty to employ his faculties on subjects more interesting to himself, and more extensively useful to others.

These effects, notwithstanding a variety of opposing causes which still exist, have already resulted, in a very sensible degree, from the liberal policy of modern times. Mr. Hume, in his *Essay on Commerce,* after taking notice of the numerous armies raised and maintained by the small republics in the ancient world, ascribes the military power of these states to their want of commerce and luxury. "Few artisans were maintained by the labour of the farmers, and therefore more soldiers might live upon it." He adds, however, that "the policy of ancient times was VIOLENT, and contrary to the NATURAL course of things;"—by which, I presume he means, that it aimed too much at modifying, by the force of positive institutions, the order of society, according to some preconceived idea of expediency, without trusting sufficiently to those principles of the human constitution, which, wherever they are allowed free scope, not only conduct mankind to happiness, but lay the foundation of a progressive improvement in their condition and in their character. The advantages which modern policy possesses over the ancient, arise principally from its conformity, in some of the most important articles of Political Economy, to an order of things recommended by nature; and it would not be difficult to shew, that where it remains imperfect, its errors may be traced to the restraints it imposes on the natural course of human affairs. Indeed, in these restraints may be discovered the latent seeds of many of the prejudices and follies which infect modern manners, and which have so long bid defiance to the reasonings of the philosopher and the ridicule of the satirist.

The foregoing very imperfect hints appeared to me to form, not only a proper, but in some measure a necessary introduction to the few remarks I have to offer on Mr. Smith's *Inquiry,* as they tend to illustrate a connexion between his system of commercial politics, and those speculations of his earlier years, in which he aimed more professedly at the advancement of human improvement and happiness. It is this view of Political Economy that can alone render it interesting to the moralist, and can dignify calculations of profit and loss in the eye of the philosopher. Mr. Smith has alluded to it in various

passages of his work, but he has nowhere explained himself fully on the subject; and the great stress he has laid on the effects of the *division of labour* in increasing its productive powers, seems, at first sight, to point to a different and very melancholy conclusion;—that the same causes which promote the progress of the arts, tend to degrade the mind of the artist, and, of consequence, that the growth of national wealth implies a sacrifice of the character of the people.

The fundamental doctrines of Mr. Smith's system are now so generally known, that it would have been tedious to offer any recapitulation of them in this place, even if I could have hoped to do justice to the subject, within the limits which I have prescribed to myself at present. I shall content myself, therefore, with remarking in general terms, that the great and leading object of his speculations is, to illustrate the provision made by nature in the principles of the human mind, and in the circumstances of man's external situation, for a gradual and progressive augmentation in the means of national wealth; and to demonstrate, that the most effectual plan for advancing a people to greatness, is to maintain that order of things which nature has pointed out, by allowing every man, as long as he observes the rules of justice, to pursue his own interest in his own way, and to bring both his industry and his capital into the freest competition with those of his fellow-citizens. Every system of policy which endeavours, either by extraordinary encouragements to draw towards a particular species of industry a greater share of the capital of the society than what would naturally go to it, or, by extraordinary restraints, to force from a particular species of industry some share of the capital which would otherwise be employed in it, is, in reality, subversive of the great purpose which it means to promote.

What the circumstances are, which, in modern Europe, have contributed to disturb this order of nature, and, in particular, to encourage the industry of towns, at the expense of that of the country, Mr. Smith has investigated with great ingenuity, and in such a manner, as to throw much new light on the history of that state of society which prevails in this quarter of

the globe. His observations on this subject tend to shew, that these circumstances were, in their first origin, the natural and the unavoidable result of the peculiar situation of mankind during a certain period, and that they took their rise, not from any general scheme of policy, but from the private interests and prejudices of particular orders of men.

The state of society, however, which at first arose from a singular combination of accidents, has been prolonged much beyond its natural period, by a false system of Political Economy, propagated by merchants and manufacturers, a class of individuals whose interest is not always the same with that of the public, and whose professional knowledge gave them many advantages, more particularly in the infancy of this branch of science, in defending those opinions which they wished to encourage. By means of this system, a new set of obstacles to the progress of national prosperity has been created. Those which arose from the disorders of the feudal ages, tended directly to disturb the internal arrangements of society, by obstructing the free circulation of labour and of stock, from employment to employment, and from place to place. The false system of Political Economy which has been hitherto prevalent, as its professed object has been to regulate the commercial intercourse between different nations, has produced its effect in a way less direct and less manifest, but equally prejudicial to the states that have adopted it.

On this system, as it took its rise from the prejudices, or rather from the interested views of mercantile speculators, Mr. Smith bestows the title of the *Commercial* or *Mercantile System;* and he has considered at great length its two principal expedients for enriching a nation: restraints upon importation, and encouragements to exportation. Part of these expedients, he observes, have been dictated by the spirit of monopoly, and part by a spirit of jealousy against those countries with which the balance of trade is supposed to be disadvantageous. All of them appear clearly, from his reasonings, to have a tendency unfavourable to the wealth of the nation which imposes them. His remarks with respect to the jealousy of commerce are ex-

pressed in a tone of indignation, which he seldom assumes in his political writings.

"In this manner," says he, "the sneaking arts of underling tradesmen are erected into political maxims for the conduct of a great empire. . . . By such maxims as these, nations have been taught that their interest consisted in beggaring all their neighbours. Each nation has been made to look with an invidious eye upon the prosperity of all the nations with which it trades, and to consider their gain as its own loss. Commerce, which ought naturally to be among nations as among individuals, a bond of union and friendship, has become the most fertile source of discord and animosity. The capricious ambition of kings and ministers has not, during the present and the preceding century, been more fatal to the repose of Europe, than the impertinent jealousy of merchants and manufacturers. The violence and injustice of the rulers of mankind is an ancient evil, for which, perhaps, the nature of human affairs can scarce admit of a remedy. But the mean rapacity, the monopolizing spirit of merchants and manufacturers, who neither are, nor ought to be, the rulers of mankind, though it cannot perhaps be corrected, may very easily be prevented from disturbing the tranquillity of any body but themselves."*

Such are the liberal principles which, according to Mr. Smith, ought to direct the commercial policy of nations; and of which it ought to be the great object of legislators to facilitate the establishment. In what manner the execution of the theory should be conducted in particular instances, is a question of a very different nature, and to which the answer must vary, in different countries, according to the different circumstances of the case. In a speculative work, such as Mr. Smith's, the consideration of this question did not fall properly under his general plan; but that he was abundantly aware of the danger to be apprehended from a rash application of political theories, appears not only from the general strain of his writings, but from some incidental observations which he has expressly made upon the subject. "So unfortunate," says he, in one

* [*Wealth of Nations*, Book IV. chap. iii.; Vol. II. pp. 243, 244, tenth edition.]

passage, "are the effects of all the regulations of the mercantile system, that they not only introduce very dangerous disorders into the state of the body politic, but disorders which it is often difficult to remedy, without occasioning, for a time at least, still greater disorders.—In what manner, therefore, the natural system of perfect liberty and justice ought gradually to be restored, we must leave to the wisdom of future statesmen and legislators to determine."* In the last edition of his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, he has introduced some remarks which have an obvious reference to the same important doctrine. The following passage seems to refer more particularly to those derangements of the social order which derived their origin from the feudal institutions.

"The man whose public spirit is prompted altogether by humanity and benevolence, will respect the established powers and privileges even of individuals, and still more of the great orders and societies into which the state is divided. Though he should consider some of them as in some measure abusive, he will content himself with moderating, what he often cannot annihilate without great violence. When he cannot conquer the rooted prejudices of the people by reason and persuasion, he will not attempt to subdue them by force; but will religiously observe what, by Cicero, is justly called the divine maxim of Plato, never to use violence to his country no more than to his parents. He will accommodate, as well as he can, his public arrangements to the confirmed habits and prejudices of the people; and will remedy, as well as he can, the inconveniences which may flow from the want of those regulations which the people are adverse to submit to. When he cannot establish the right, he will not disdain to ameliorate the wrong; but like Solon, when he cannot establish the best system of laws, he will endeavour to establish the best that the people can bear."†

These cautions with respect to the practical application of general principles were peculiarly necessary from the Author of *The Wealth of Nations;* as the unlimited freedom of trade,

* [Ibid. Book IV. chap. vii. vol. ii. pp. 426, 427, tenth edition.]

† [Part VI, sect. ii. chap. ii., sixth and later editions.]

which it is the chief aim of his work to recommend, is extremely apt, by flattering the indolence of the statesman, to suggest to those who are invested with absolute power, the idea of carrying it into immediate execution. "Nothing is more adverse to the tranquillity of a statesman," says the author of an *Eloge on the Administration of Colbert*, "than a spirit of moderation; because it condemns him to perpetual observation, shows him every moment the insufficiency of his wisdom, and leaves him the melancholy sense of his own imperfection; while, under the shelter of a few general principles, a systematical politician enjoys a perpetual calm. By the help of one alone, that of a perfect liberty of trade, he would govern the world, and would leave human affairs to arrange themselves at pleasure, under the operation of the prejudices and the self-interests of individuals. If these run counter to each other, he gives himself no anxiety about the consequence; he insists that the result cannot be judged of till after a century or two shall have elapsed. If his contemporaries, in consequence of the disorder into which he has thrown public affairs, are scrupulous about submitting quietly to the experiment, he accuses them of impatience. They alone, and not he, are to blame for what they have suffered; and the principle continues to be inculcated with the same zeal and the same confidence as before." These are the words of the ingenious and eloquent author of the *Eloge on Colbert* which obtained the prize from the French Academy in the year 1763; a performance which, although confined and erroneous in its speculative views, abounds with just and important reflections of a practical nature. How far his remarks apply to that particular class of politicians whom he had evidently in his eye in the foregoing passage, I shall not presume to decide.

It is hardly necessary for me to add to these observations, that they do not detract in the least from the value of those political theories which attempt to delineate the principles of a perfect legislation. Such theories (as I have elsewhere observed[1])

[1] *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, p. 261;—[chap. iv. § 8, *supra*, *Works*, Vol. II. p. 240.]

ought to be considered "merely as descriptions of the *ultimate* objects at which the statesman ought to aim. The tranquillity of his administration, and the immediate success of his measures, depend on his good sense and his practical skill; and his theoretical principles only enable him to direct his measures steadily and wisely, to promote the improvement and happiness of mankind, and prevent him from being ever led astray from these important ends, by more limited views of temporary expedience." "In all cases," says Mr. Hume, "it must be advantageous to know what is most perfect in the kind, that we may be able to bring any real constitution or form of government as near it as possible, by such gentle alterations and innovations as may not give too great disturbance to society."*

The limits of this Memoir make it impossible for me to examine particularly the merit of Mr. Smith's work in point of originality. That his doctrine concerning the freedom of trade and of industry coincides remarkably with that which we find in the writings of the French Economists, appears from the slight view of their system which he himself has given. But it surely cannot be pretended by the warmest admirers of that system, that any one of its numerous expositors has approached to Mr. Smith in the precision and perspicuity with which he has stated it, or in the scientific and luminous manner in which he has deduced it from elementary principles. The awkwardness of their technical language, and the paradoxical form in which they have chosen to present some of their opinions, are acknowledged even by those who are most willing to do justice to their merits; whereas it may be doubted, with respect to Mr. Smith's *Inquiry*, if there exists any book beyond the circle of the mathematical and physical sciences, which is at once so agreeable in its arrangement to the rules of a sound logic, and so accessible to the examination of ordinary readers. Abstracting entirely from the author's peculiar and original speculations, I do not know that, upon any subject whatever, a work has been produced in our times, containing so methodical, so compre-

* [*Essays*, Vol. I., *Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth.*]

hensive, and so judicious a digest of all the most profound and enlightened philosophy of the age.[1]

In justice also to Mr. Smith, it must be observed, that although some of the Economical writers had the start of him in publishing their doctrines to the world, these doctrines appear, with respect to him, to have been altogether original, and the result of his own reflections. Of this, I think, every person must be convinced, who reads the *Inquiry* with due attention, and is at pains to examine the gradual and beautiful progress of the author's ideas: but in case any doubt should remain on this head, it may be proper to mention, that Mr. Smith's Political Lectures, comprehending the fundamental principles of his *Inquiry*, were delivered at Glasgow as early as the year 1752 or 1753; at a period, surely, when there existed no French performance on the subject, that could be of much use to him in guiding his researches.[2] In the year 1756, indeed, M. Turgot (who is said to have imbibed his first notions concerning the unlimited freedom of commerce from an old merchant, M. Gournay) published in the *Encyclopédie*, an article which sufficiently shows how completely his mind was emancipated from the old prejudices in favour of commercial regulations: But that even then, these opinions were confined to a few speculative men in France, appears from a passage in the *Mémoires sur la Vie et les Ouvrages de M. Turgot;* in which, after a short quotation from the article just mentioned, the author adds:—"These ideas were *then* considered as paradoxical; they are since become common, and they will one day be adopted universally."

The Political Discourses of Mr. Hume were evidently of greater use to Mr. Smith, than any other book that had appeared prior to his Lectures. Even Mr. Hume's theories, however, though always plausible and ingenious, and in most

[1] See Note H.

[2] In proof of this, it is sufficient for me to appeal to a short history of the progress of Political Economy in France, published in one of the volumes of *Ephémérides du Citoyen*. See the first part of the volume for the year 1769. The paper is entitled, *Notice abrégée des différens Ecrits modernes, qui ont concouru en France à former la science de l'Economie Politique.*

instances profound and just, involve some fundamental mistakes; and, when compared with Mr. Smith's, afford a striking proof, that, in considering a subject so extensive and so complicated, the most penetrating sagacity, if directed only to particular questions, is apt to be led astray by first appearances; and that nothing can guard us effectually against error, but a comprehensive survey of the whole field of discussion, assisted by an accurate and patient analysis of the ideas about which our reasonings are employed.—It may be worth while to add, that Mr. Hume's Essay *On the Jealousy of Trade*, with some other of his Political Discourses, received a very flattering proof of M. Turgot's approbation, by his undertaking the task of translating them into the French language.[1]

I am aware that the evidence I have hitherto produced of Mr. Smith's originality may be objected to as not perfectly decisive, as it rests entirely on the recollection of those students who attended his first courses of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow; a recollection which, at the distance of forty years, cannot be supposed to be very accurate. There exists, however, fortunately, a short manuscript drawn up by Mr. Smith in the year 1755, and presented by him to a society of which he was then a member; in which paper, a pretty long enumeration is given of certain leading principles, both political and literary, to which he was anxious to establish his exclusive right, in order to prevent the possibility of some rival claims which he thought he had reason to apprehend, and to which his situation as a Professor, added to his unreserved communications in private companies, rendered him peculiarly liable. This paper is at present in my possession. It is expressed with a good deal of that honest and indignant warmth, which is perhaps unavoidable by a man who is conscious of the purity of his own intentions, when he suspects that advantages have been taken of the frankness of his temper. On such occasions, due allowances are not always made for those plagiarisms, which, however cruel in their effects, do not necessarily imply bad faith in those who are guilty of them; for the bulk of

[1] See Note I.

mankind, incapable themselves of original thought, are perfectly unable to form a conception of the nature of the injury done to a man of inventive genius, by encroaching on a favourite speculation. For reasons known to some members of this Society, it would be improper by the publication of this manuscript, to revive the memory of private differences; and I should not have even alluded to it, if I did not think it a valuable document of the progress of Mr. Smith's political ideas at a very early period. Many of the most important opinions in *The Wealth of Nations* are there detailed; but I shall quote only the following sentences:—"Man is generally considered by statesmen and projectors as the materials of a sort of political mechanics. Projectors disturb nature in the course of her operations in human affairs; and it requires no more than to let her alone, and give her fair play in the pursuit of her ends, that she may establish her own designs."—And in another passage:—"Little else is requisite to carry a State to the highest degree of opulence from the lowest barbarism, but peace, easy taxes, and a tolerable administration of justice; all the rest being brought about by the natural course of things. All governments which thwart this natural course, which force things into another channel, or which endeavour to arrest the progress of society at a particular point, are unnatural, and to support themselves are obliged to be oppressive and tyrannical. . . . A great part of the opinions," he observes, "enumerated in this paper, is treated of at length in some lectures which I have still by me, and which were written in the hand of a clerk, who left my service six years ago. They have all of them been the constant subjects of my lectures since I first taught Mr. Craigie's class, the first winter I spent in Glasgow, down to this day, without any considerable variation. They had all of them been the subjects of lectures which I read at Edinburgh the winter before I left it, and I can adduce innumerable witnesses, both from that place and from this, who will ascertain them sufficiently to be mine."

After all, perhaps the merit of such a work as Mr. Smith's is to be estimated less from the novelty of the principles it

contains, than from the reasonings employed to support these principles, and from the scientific manner in which they are unfolded in their proper order and connexion. General assertions with respect to the advantages of a free commerce may be collected from various writers of an early date. But in questions of so complicated a nature as occur in Political Economy, the credit of such opinions belongs of right to the author who first established their solidity, and followed them out to their remote consequences; not to him who, by a fortunate accident, first stumbled on the truth.

Besides the principles which Mr. Smith considered as more peculiarly his own, his *Inquiry* exhibits a systematical view of the most important articles of Political Economy, so as to serve the purpose of an elementary treatise on that very extensive and difficult science. The skill and the comprehensiveness of mind displayed in his arrangement, can be judged of by those alone who have compared it with that adopted by his immediate predecessors. And perhaps, in point of utility, the labour he has employed in connecting and methodizing their scattered ideas, is not less valuable than the results of his own original speculations: for it is only when digested in a clear and natural order, that truths make their proper impression on the mind, and that erroneous opinions can be combated with success.

It does not belong to my present undertaking (even if I were qualified for such a task) to attempt a separation of the solid and important doctrines of Mr. Smith's book from those opinions which appear exceptionable or doubtful. I acknowledge that there are some of his conclusions to which I would not be understood to subscribe implicitly, more particularly in that chapter where he treats of the principles of Taxation;—a subject which he has certainly examined in a manner more loose and unsatisfactory than most of the others which have fallen under his review.[1]

It would be improper for me to conclude this Section without taking notice of the manly and dignified freedom with which

[1] See Note K.

the author uniformly delivers his opinions, and of the superiority which he discovers throughout, to all the little passions connected with the factions of the times in which he wrote. Whoever takes the trouble to compare the general tone of his composition with the period of its first publication, cannot fail to feel and acknowledge the force of this remark.—It is not often that a disinterested zeal for truth has so soon met with its just reward. Philosophers (to use an expression of Lord Bacon's) are "the servants of posterity;" and most of those who have devoted their talents to the best interests of mankind, have been obliged, like Bacon, to "bequeath their fame" to a race yet unborn, and to console themselves with the idea of sowing what another generation was to reap:

"Insere Daphni pyros, carpent tua poma nepotes."

Mr. Smith was more fortunate; or rather, in this respect, his fortune was singular. He survived the publication of his work only fifteen years; and yet, during that short period, he had not only the satisfaction of seeing the opposition it at first excited gradually subside, but of witnessing the practical influence of his writings on the commercial policy of his country.

SECTION V.

CONCLUSION OF THE NARRATIVE.

About two years after the publication of *The Wealth of Nations*, Mr. Smith was appointed one of the Commissioners of his Majesty's Customs in Scotland; a preferment which, in his estimation, derived an additional value from its being bestowed on him at the request of the Duke of Buccleuch. The greater part of these two years he passed in London, enjoying a society too extensive and varied to afford him any opportunity of indulging his taste for study. His time, however, was not lost to himself; for much of it was spent with some of the first names in English literature. Of these no unfavourable specimen is preserved by Dr. Barnard, in his well-known *Verses addressed to Sir Joshua Reynolds and his Friends.*

"If I have thoughts, and can't express 'em,
Gibbon shall teach me how to dress 'em
In words select and terse:
Jones teach me modesty and Greek,
Smith how to think, Burke how to speak,
And Beauclerc to converse."[1]

In consequence of Mr. Smith's appointment to the Board of Customs, he removed, in 1778, to Edinburgh, where he spent the last twelve years of his life, enjoying an affluence which was more than equal to all his wants; and, what was to him of still greater value, the prospect of passing the remainder of his days among the companions of his youth.

His mother, who, though now in extreme old age, still pos-

[1] See *Annual Register* for the year 1776.

sessed a considerable degree of health, and retained all her faculties unimpaired, accompanied him to town; and his cousin Miss Jane Douglas, (who had formerly been a member of his family at Glasgow, and for whom he had always felt the affection of a brother,) while she divided with him those tender attentions which her aunt's infirmities required, relieved him of a charge for which he was peculiarly ill qualified, by her friendly superintendence of his domestic economy.

The accession to his income which his new office brought him, enabled him to gratify, to a much greater extent than his former circumstances admitted of, the natural generosity of his disposition; and the state of his funds at the time of his death, compared with his very moderate establishment, confirmed, beyond a doubt, what his intimate acquaintances had often suspected, that a large proportion of his annual savings was allotted to offices of secret charity. A small, but excellent library, which he had gradually formed with great judgment in the selection; and a simple, though hospitable table, where, without the formality of an invitation, he was always happy to receive his friends, were the only expenses that could be considered as his own.[1]

The change in his habits which his removal to Edinburgh produced, was not equally favourable to his literary pursuits. The duties of his office, though they required but little exertion of thought, were yet sufficient to waste his spirits and to dissipate his attention; and now that his career is closed, it is impossible to reflect on the time they consumed, without lamenting, that it had not been employed in labours more profitable to the world, and more equal to his mind.

During the first years of his residence in this city, his studies seemed to be entirely suspended; and his passion for letters

[1] Some very affecting instances of Mr. Smith's beneficence, in cases where he found it impossible to conceal entirely his good offices, have been mentioned to me by a near relation of his, and one of his most confidential friends, Miss Ross, daughter of the late Patrick Ross, Esq. of Innernethy. They were all on a scale much beyond what might have been expected from his fortune; and were accompanied with circumstances equally honourable to the delicacy of his feelings and the liberality of his heart.

served only to amuse his leisure, and to animate his conversation. The infirmities of age, of which he very early began to feel the approaches, reminded him at last, when it was too late, of what he yet owed to the public, and to his own fame. The principal materials of the works which he had announced, had been long ago collected; and little probably was wanting, but a few years of health and retirement, to bestow on them that systematical arrangement in which he delighted; and the ornaments of that flowing, and apparently artless style, which he had studiously cultivated, but which, after all his experience in composition, he adjusted, with extreme difficulty, to his own taste.[1]

The death of his mother in 1784, which was followed by that of Miss Douglas in 1788, contributed, it is probable, to frustrate these projects. They had been the objects of his affection for more than sixty years, and in their society he had enjoyed, from his infancy, all that he ever knew of the endearments of a family.[2] He was now alone, and helpless; and though he bore his loss with equanimity, and regained apparently his former cheerfulness, yet his health and strength gradually declined till the period of his death, which happened in July 1790, about two years after that of his cousin, and six after that of his mother. His last illness, which arose from a chronic obstruction in his bowels, was lingering and painful, but had every consolation to soothe it which he could derive from the tenderest sympathy of his friends, and from the complete resignation of his own mind.

A few days before his death, finding his end approach rapidly,

[1] Mr. Smith observed to me, not long before his death, that after all his practice in writing, he composed as slowly, and with as great difficulty, as at first. He added, at the same time, that Mr. Hume had acquired so great a facility in this respect, that the last volumes of his *History* were printed from his original copy, with a few marginal corrections.

It may gratify the curiosity of some readers to know, that when Mr. Smith was employed in composition, he generally walked up and down his apartment, dictating to a secretary. All Mr. Hume's works (I have been assured) were written with his own hand. A critical reader may, I think, perceive in the different styles of these two classical writers, the effects of their different modes of study.

[2] See Note L.

he gave orders to destroy all his manuscripts, excepting some detached Essays, which he entrusted to the care of his executors, and they were accordingly committed to the flames. What were the particular contents of these papers, is not known even to his most intimate friends; but there can be no doubt that they consisted, in part, of the lectures on Rhetoric, which he read at Edinburgh in the year 1748, and of the lectures on Natural Religion and on Jurisprudence, which formed part of his course at Glasgow. That this irreparable injury to letters proceeded, in some degree, from an excessive solicitude in the author about his posthumous reputation, may perhaps be true; but with respect to some of his manuscripts, may we not suppose that he was influenced by higher motives? It is but seldom that a philosopher, who has been occupied from his youth with moral or with political inquiries, succeeds completely to his wish in stating to others, the grounds upon which his own opinions are founded; and hence it is, that the known principles of an individual, who has approved to the public his candour, his liberality, and his judgment, are entitled to a weight and an authority, independent of the evidence which he is able, upon any particular occasion, to produce in their support. A secret consciousness of this circumstance, and an apprehension, that by not doing justice to an important argument, the progress of truth may be rather retarded than advanced, have probably induced many authors to withhold from the world the unfinished results of their most valuable labours, and to content themselves with giving the general sanction of their suffrages to truths which they regarded as peculiarly interesting to the human race.[1]

[1] Since writing the above, I have been favoured by Dr. Hutton with the following particulars:—

"Some time before his last illness, when Mr. Smith had occasion to go to London, he enjoined his friends, to whom he had entrusted the disposal of his manuscripts, that in the event of his death, they should destroy all the volumes of his lectures, doing with the rest of his manuscripts what they pleased. When now he had become weak, and saw the approaching period of his life, he spoke to his friends again upon the same subject. They entreated him to make his mind easy, as he might depend upon their fulfilling his desire. He was then satisfied. But some days afterwards, finding his anxiety not entirely removed, he begged one of them

The additions to the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, [sixth edition, in two volumes 8vo, 1790,] most of which were composed under severe disease, had fortunately been sent to the press in the beginning of the preceding winter, and the author lived to see the publication of the work. The moral and serious strain that prevails through these additions, when connected with the circumstance of his declining health, adds a peculiar charm to his pathetic eloquence, and communicates a new interest, if possible, to those sublime truths, which, in the academical retirement of his youth, awakened the first ardours of his genius, and on which the last efforts of his mind reposed.

to destroy the volumes immediately. This accordingly was done, and his mind was so much relieved, that he was able to receive his friends in the evening with his usual complacency.

"They had been in use to sup with him every Sunday, and that evening there was a pretty numerous meeting of them. Mr. Smith not finding himself able to sit up with them as usual, retired to bed before supper; and, as he went away, took leave of his friends by saying, 'I believe we must adjourn this meeting to some other place.' He died a very few days afterwards."

Mr. Riddell, an intimate friend of Mr. Smith's, who was present at one of the conversations on the subject of the manuscripts, mentioned to me, in addition to Dr. Hutton's note, that Mr. Smith regretted "he had done so little." "But I meant," said he, "to have done more; and there are materials in my papers, of which I could have made a great deal. But that is now out of the question."

That the idea of destroying such unfinished works as might be in his possession at the time of his death, was not the effect of any sudden or hasty resolution, appears from the following letter to Mr. Hume, written by Mr. Smith in 1773, at a time when he was preparing himself for a journey to London, with the prospect of a pretty long absence from Scotland.

"EDINBURGH, 16*th April* 1773.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—As I have left the care of all my literary papers to you, I must tell you, that except those which I carry along with me, there are none worth the publication, but a fragment of a great work, which contains a history of the Astronomical systems that were successively in fashion down to the time of Descartes. Whether that might not be published as a fragment of an intended juvenile work, I leave entirely to your judgment, though I begin to suspect myself that there is more refinement than solidity in some parts of it. This little work you will find in a thin folio paper book in my back room. All the other loose papers which you will find in that desk, or within the glass-folding doors of a bureau which stands in my bedroom, together with about eighteen thin paper folio books, which you will likewise find within the same glass-folding doors, I desire may be destroyed without any examination. Unless I die very suddenly, I shall take care that the papers I carry with me shall be carefully sent to you.—I ever am, my dear Friend, most faithfully yours,

"ADAM SMITH.

"To DAVID HUME, Esq.,
St. Andrew Square."

In a letter addressed, in the year 1787, to the Principal of the University of Glasgow, in consequence of being elected Rector of that learned body, a pleasing memorial remains of the satisfaction with which he always recollected that period of his literary career, which had been more peculiarly consecrated to these important studies. "No preferment," says he, "could have given me so much real satisfaction. No man can owe greater obligations to a society than I do to the University of Glasgow. They educated me; they sent me to Oxford. Soon after my return to Scotland, they elected me one of their own members, and afterwards preferred me to another office, to which the abilities and virtues of the never-to-be-forgotten Dr. Hutcheson had given a superior degree of illustration. The period of thirteen years which I spent as a member of that society, I remember as by far the most useful, and therefore as by far the happiest and most honourable period of my life; and now, after three-and-twenty years' absence, to be remembered in so very agreeable a manner by my old friends and protectors, gives me a heartfelt joy which I cannot easily express to you."

The short narrative which I have now finished, however barren of incident, may convey a general idea of the genius and character of this illustrious man. Of the intellectual gifts and attainments by which he was so eminently distinguished;—of the originality and comprehensiveness of his views; the extent, the variety, and the correctness of his information; the inexhaustible fertility of his invention; and the ornaments which his rich and beautiful imagination had borrowed from classical culture;—he has left behind him lasting monuments. To his private worth the most certain of all testimonies may be found in that confidence, respect, and attachment, which followed him through all the various relations of life. The serenity and gaiety he enjoyed, under the pressure of his growing infirmities, and the warm interest he felt to the last, in everything connected with the welfare of his friends, will be long remembered by a small circle, with whom, as long as his strength permitted, he regularly spent an evening in the week, and to whom

the recollection of his worth still forms a pleasing, though melancholy bond of union.

The more delicate and characteristical features of his mind, it is perhaps impossible to trace. That there were many peculiarities, both in his manners and in his intellectual habits, was manifest to the most superficial observer; but although, to those who knew him, these peculiarities detracted nothing from the respect which his abilities commanded, and although, to his intimate friends, they added an inexpressible charm to his conversation, while they displayed, in the most interesting light, the artless simplicity of his heart, yet it would require a very skilful pencil to present them to the public eye. He was certainly not fitted for the general commerce of the world, or for the business of active life. The comprehensive speculations with which he had been occupied from his youth, and the variety of materials which his own invention continually supplied to his thoughts, rendered him habitually inattentive to familiar objects, and to common occurrences; and he frequently exhibited instances of absence, which have scarcely been surpassed by the fancy of La Bruyere. Even in company, he was apt to be engrossed with his studies, and appeared at times, by the motion of his lips, as well as by his looks and gestures, to be in the fervour of composition. I have often, however, been struck at the distance of years, with his accurate memory of the most trifling particulars; and am inclined to believe, from this and some other circumstances, that he possessed a power, not perhaps uncommon among absent men, of recollecting, in consequence of subsequent efforts of reflection, many occurrences which, at the time when they happened, did not seem to have sensibly attracted his notice.

To the defect now mentioned, it was probably owing, in part, that he did not fall in easily with the common dialogue of conversation, and that he was somewhat apt to convey his own ideas in the form of a lecture. When he did so, however, it never proceeded from a wish to engross the discourse, or to gratify his vanity. His own inclination disposed him so strongly to enjoy in silence the gaiety of those around him,

that his friends were often led to concert little schemes, in order to engage him in the discussions most likely to interest him. Nor do I think I shall be accused of going too far, when I say, that he was scarcely ever known to start a new topic himself, or to appear unprepared upon those topics that were introduced by others. Indeed, his conversation was never more amusing than when he gave a loose to his genius, upon the very few branches of knowledge of which he only possessed the outlines.

The opinions he formed of men, upon a slight acquaintance, were frequently erroneous; but the tendency of his nature inclined him much more to blind partiality, than to ill-founded prejudice. The enlarged views of human affairs, on which his mind habitually dwelt, left him neither time nor inclination to study, in detail, the uninteresting peculiarities of ordinary characters; and accordingly, though intimately acquainted with the capacities of the intellect, and the workings of the heart, and accustomed in his theories to mark, with the most delicate hand, the nicest shades, both of genius and of the passions; yet, in judging of individuals, it sometimes happened, that his estimates were, in a surprising degree, wide of the truth.

The opinions, too, which, in the thoughtlessness and confidence of his social hours, he was accustomed to hazard on books and on questions of speculation, were not uniformly such as might have been expected from the superiority of his understanding, and the singular consistency of his philosophical principles. They were liable to be influenced by accidental circumstances, and by the humour of the moment, and when retailed by those who only saw him occasionally, suggested false and contradictory ideas of his real sentiments. On these, however, as on most other occasions, there was always much truth as well as ingenuity in his remarks; and if the different opinions which, at different times, he pronounced upon the same subject, had been all combined together, so as to modify and limit each other, they would probably have afforded materials for a decision, equally comprehensive and just. But, in the society of his friends, he had no disposition to form those

qualified conclusions that we admire in his writings; and he generally contented himself with a bold and masterly sketch of the object, from the first point of view in which his temper or his fancy presented it. Something of the same kind might be remarked when he attempted, in the flow of his spirits, to delineate those characters which, from long intimacy, he might have been supposed to understand thoroughly. The picture was always lively and expressive, and commonly bore a strong and amusing resemblance to the original, when viewed under one particular aspect, but seldom, perhaps, conveyed a just and complete conception of it in all its dimensions and proportions. —In a word, it was the fault of his unpremedifated judgments, to be too systematical, and too much in extremes.

But, in whatever way these trifling peculiarities in his manners may be explained, there can be no doubt that they were intimately connected with the genuine artlessness of his mind. In this amiable quality, he often recalled to his friends the accounts that are given of good La Fontaine, a quality which in him derived a peculiar grace from the singularity of its combination with those powers of reason and of eloquence which, in his political and moral writings, have long engaged the admiration of Europe.

In his external form and appearance, there was nothing uncommon. When perfectly at ease, and when warmed with conversation, his gestures were animated and not ungraceful; and, in the society of those he loved, his features were often brightened with a smile of inexpressible benignity. In the company of strangers, his tendency to absence, and perhaps still more his consciousness of this tendency, rendered his manner somewhat embarrassed—an effect which was probably not a little heightened by those speculative ideas of propriety, which his recluse habits tended at once to perfect in his conception, and to diminish his power of realizing. He never sat for his picture, but the medallion of Tassie conveys an exact idea of his profile, and of the general expression of his countenance.

His valuable library, together with the rest of his property,

was bequeathed to his cousin, Mr. David Douglas, Advocate.* In the education of this young gentleman he had employed much of his leisure, and it was only two years before his death, (at the time when he could ill spare the pleasure of his society,) that he had sent him to study law at Glasgow, under the care of Mr. Millar; the strongest proof he could give of his disinterested zeal for the improvement of his friend, as well as of the esteem in which he held the abilities of that eminent professor.

The executors of his will were Dr. Black and Dr. Hutton, with whom he had long lived in habits of the most intimate and cordial friendship, and who, to the many other testimonies which they had given him of their affection, added the mournful office of witnessing his last moments.

* [Ultimately a Senator of the College of Justice, under the title of Lord Reston.]

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

NOTE A, p. 6.

THE late James Oswald, Esq., for many years one of the most active, able, and public-spirited of our Scottish representatives in Parliament. He was more particularly distinguished by his knowledge in matters of finance, and by his attention to whatever concerned the commercial or the agricultural interests of the country. From the manner in which he is mentioned in a paper of Mr. Smith's which I have perused, he appears to have combined, with that detailed information which he is well known to have possessed as a statesman and man of business, a taste for the more general and philosophical discussions of Political Economy. He lived in habits of great intimacy with Lord Kames and Mr. Hume, and was one of Mr. Smith's earliest and most confidential friends.

NOTE B, p. 8.

Those who have derived their knowledge of Dr. Hutcheson solely from his publications, may perhaps be inclined to dispute the propriety of the epithet *eloquent*, when applied to any of his compositions, more particularly when applied to *The System of Moral Philosophy*, which was published after his death, as the substance of his Lectures in the University of Glasgow. His talents, however, as a public speaker, must have been of a far higher order than what he has displayed as a writer; all his pupils whom I have happened to meet with (some of them, certainly, very competent judges) having agreed exactly with each other in their accounts of the extraordinary impression which they made on the minds of his hearers. I have mentioned, in the text, Mr. Smith as one of his warmest admirers; and to *his* name I shall take this opportunity of adding those of the late Earl of Selkirk, the late Lord President Miller, and the late Dr. Archibald Maclaine, the very learned and judicious translator of Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History*. My father, too, who had attended Dr. Hutcheson's Lectures for several years, never spoke of them without much sensibility. On this occasion we can only say, as

Quintilian has done of the eloquence of Hortensius:—"Apparet placuisse aliquid eo dicente, quod legentes non invenimus."

Dr. Hutcheson's *Inquiry into our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue;* his *Discourse on the Passions;* and his *Illustrations of the Moral Sense,* are much more strongly marked with the characteristical features of his genius, than his posthumous work. His great and deserved fame, however, in this country, rests *now* chiefly on the traditionary history of his Academical Lectures, which appear to have contributed very powerfully to diffuse, in Scotland, that taste for analytical discussion, and that spirit of liberal inquiry, to which the world is indebted for some of the most valuable productions of the eighteenth century.

NOTE C, p. 30.

According to the learned English translator of Aristotle's *Ethics and Politics,* the general idea which runs through Mr. Smith's *Theory,* was obviously borrowed from the following passage of Polybius:—"From the union of the two sexes, to which all are naturally inclined, children are born. When any of these, therefore, being arrived at perfect age, instead of yielding suitable returns of gratitude and assistance to those by whom they have been bred, on the contrary, attempt to injure them by words or actions, it is manifest that those who behold the wrong, after having also seen the sufferings and the anxious cares that were sustained by the parents in the nourishment and education of their children, must be greatly offended and displeased at such proceeding. For Man, who among all the various kinds of animals is alone endowed with the faculty of reason, cannot, like the rest, pass over such actions, but will make reflection on what he sees; and comparing likewise the future with the present, will not fail to express his indignation at this injurious treatment, to which, as he foresees, he may also at some time be exposed. Thus, again, when any one who has been succoured by another in the time of danger, instead of shewing the like kindness to this benefactor, endeavours at any time to destroy or hurt him; it is certain that all men must be shocked by such ingratitude, through sympathy with the resentment of their neighbour, and from an apprehension also, that the case may be their own. And from hence arises, in the mind of every man, a certain *notion* of the nature and force of Duty, in which consists both the beginning and the end of Justice. In like manner, the man who, in defence of others, is seen to throw himself the foremost into every danger, and even to sustain the fury of the fiercest animals, never fails to obtain the loudest acclamations of applause and veneration from all the multitude; while he who shews a different conduct is pursued with censure and reproach. And thus it is, that the people begin to discern the nature of things honourable and base, and in what consists the difference between them; and to perceive that the former, on account of the advantage that attends them, are fit to be admired and imitated, and the latter to be detested and avoided."

"The doctrine," says Dr. Gillies, "contained in this passage, is expanded by Dr. Smith into a Theory of Moral Sentiments. But he departs from *his author*, in placing the perception of right and wrong, in sentiment or feeling, ultimately and simply. . . . Polybius, on the contrary, maintains with Aristotle, that these notions arise from reason or Intellect, operating on affection or Appetite; or, in

other words, that the Moral Faculty is a compound, and may be resolved into two simpler principles of the mind."[1]

The only expression I object to in the two preceding sentences, is the phrase, *his author*, which has the appearance of insinuating a charge of plagiarism against Mr. Smith;—a charge which, I am confident, he did not deserve, and to which the above extract does not, in my opinion, afford any plausible colour. It exhibits, indeed, an instance of a curious coincidence between two philosophers in their views of the same subject; and as such, I have no doubt that Mr. Smith himself would have remarked it, had it occurred to his memory when he was writing his book. Of such accidental coincidences between different minds, examples present themselves every day to those who, after having drawn from their internal resources all the lights they could supply on a particular question, have the curiosity to compare their own conclusions with those of their predecessors. And it is extremely worthy of observation, that, in proportion as any conclusion approaches to the truth, the number of previous approximations to it may be reasonably expected to be multiplied.

In the case before us, however, the question about originality is of little or no moment, for the peculiar merit of Mr. Smith's work does not lie in his general principle, but in the skilful use he has made of it to give a systematical arrangement to the most important discussions and doctrines of Ethics. In this point of view, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* may be justly regarded as one of the most original efforts of the human mind in that branch of science to which it relates; and even if we were to suppose that it was first suggested to the author by a remark of which the world was in possession for two thousand years before, this very circumstance would only reflect a stronger lustre on the novelty of his design, and on the invention and taste displayed in its execution.

I have said, in the text, that my own opinion about the foundation of morals, does not agree with that of Mr. Smith; and I propose to state, in another publication, the grounds of my dissent from his conclusions on that question.* At present, I shall only observe, that I consider the defects of his Theory as originating rather in a *partial*, than in a *mistaken* view of the subject; while, on some of the most essential points of Ethics, it appears to me to approximate very nearly to a correct statement of the truth. I must not omit to add, in justice to the author, that his zeal to support his favourite system never has led him to vitiate or misrepresent the phenomena which he has employed it to explain; and that the connected order which he has given to a multiplicity of isolated facts, must facilitate greatly the studies of any of his successors, who may hereafter prosecute the same inquiry, agreeably to the severe rules of the inductive Logic.

After the passage which I have quoted in the beginning of this Note, I hope I shall be pardoned if I express my doubts, whether the learned and ingenious writer has not, upon this, as well as on some other occasions, allowed his partiality to the Ancients to blind him a little too much to the merits of his contemporaries. Would not his laborious and interesting researches into the remains of the Greek philosophy, have been employed still more usefully in revealing to us the systems

[1] Gillies's *Aristotle*, Vol. I. pp. 302, 303, 2d edit.

* [*Vide supra*, *Works*, Vol. VII. pp. 35, 36, 39, 329, *seq.*, 407, *seq.*]

and discoveries to which our successors may yet lay claim, than in conjectures concerning the origin of those with which we are already acquainted? How does it happen that those men of profound erudition, who can so easily trace every *past* improvement to the fountainhead of antiquity, should not sometimes amuse themselves, and instruct the world, by anticipating the *future* progress of the human mind?

In studying the connexion and *filiation* of successive Theories, when we are at a loss, in any instance, for a link to complete the continuity of philosophical speculation, it seems much more reasonable to search for it in the systems of the immediately preceding period, and in the inquiries which *then* occupied the public attention, than in detached sentences, or accidental expressions gleaned from the relics of distant ages. It is thus only that we can hope to seize the precise point of view, in which an author's subject first presented itself to his attention; and to account, to our own satisfaction, from the particular aspect under which he saw it, for the subsequent direction which was given to his curiosity. In following such a plan, our object is not to detect plagiarisms, which we suppose men of genius to have intentionally concealed, but to fill up an apparent chasm in the history of Science, by laying hold of the thread which insensibly guided the mind from one station to another. By what easy and natural steps Mr. Smith's Theory arose from the state of Ethical discussion in Great Britain, when he began his literary career, I shall endeavour elsewhere to explain.

A late author, of taste and learning, has written a pleasing and instructive *Essay on the Marks of Poetical Imitation*. The marks of *Philosophical Plagiarism* are not less discernible by an unprejudiced and discriminating eye, and are easily separable from that occasional similarity of thought and of illustration, which we may expect to meet with in writers of the most remote ages and countries, when employed in examining the same questions, or in establishing the same truths.

As the foregoing observations apply with fully as great force to the *Wealth of Nations*, as to the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, I trust some allowance will be made for the length of this Note.[1]

[1] I shall have occasion afterwards to vindicate Mr. Smith's claims to originality in the former of these works, against the pretensions of some foreign writers. As I do not mean, however, to recur again to his alleged plagiarisms from the Ancients, I shall introduce here, though somewhat out of place, two short quotations, from which it will appear, that the germ of his speculations concerning National Wealth, as well as concerning the principles of Ethics, is (according to Dr. Gillies) to be found in the Greek philosophers.

"By adopting Aristotle's principles on the subjects of exchangeable value and of national wealth, Dr. Smith has rescued the science of Political Economy from many false subtilties and many gross errors."—Vol. I. p. 377, 2d edition.

"The subject of money is treated above, Vol. I. p. 374, *et seq.* In that passage, compared with another in the *Magna Moralia*, we find the fundamental principles of the modern Economists."—Vol. II. p. 43.

In reply to these observations, I have only to request my readers to compare them with the well-known passage in the first book of Aristotle's *Politics*, with respect to the lawfulness of Usury. When we consider how much the interest of money enters as an element into all our modern disquisitions concerning commercial policy, is it possible to imagine, that there should be anything more than the most general and fortuitous coincidence between the reasonings of such writers as Smith, or Hume, or Turgot; and those of an author whose experience of the nature and effects of commerce was so limited, as to impress his mind with a conviction, that to receive a *premium* for the use of money, was inconsistent with the rules of morality?—[Compare the subsequent edition of Gillies's *Ethics and Politics of Aristotle*.—*Ed.*]

[NOTE D, p. 33.

[Extracted by Mr. Stewart from Nichols's *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century*, &c., Vol. III. pp. 515, 516; and appended in manuscript, to one of his own copies of this *Memoir*.—ED.]

DR. ADAM SMITH TO MR. GEORGE BAIRD.

"GLASGOW, *February* 7, 1763.

"DEAR SIR,—I have read over the contents of your friend's* work with very great pleasure; and heartily wish it was in my power to give, or to procure him all the encouragement which his ingenuity and industry deserve. I think myself greatly obliged to him for the very obliging notice he has been pleased to take of me, and should be glad to contribute anything in my power towards completing his design. I approve greatly of his plan for a Rational Grammar, and am convinced that a work of this kind, executed with his abilities and industry, may prove not only the best system of grammar, but the best system of logic in any language, as well as the best history of the natural progress of the human mind in forming the most important abstractions upon which all reasoning depends. From the short abstract which Mr. Ward has been so good as to send me, it is impossible for me to form any very decisive judgment concerning the propriety of every part of his method, particularly of some of his divisions. If I was to treat the same subject, I should endeavour to begin with the consideration of *verbs;* these being, in my apprehension, the original parts of speech, first invented to express in one word a complete event: I should then have endeavoured to show how the subject was divided from the attribute; and afterwards, how the object was distinguished from both; and in this manner I should have tried to investigate the origin and use of all the different parts of speech, and of all their different modifications, considered as necessary to express all the different qualifications and relations of any single event. Mr. Ward, however, may have excellent reasons for following his own method; and, perhaps, if I was engaged in the same task, I should find it necessary to follow the same,—things frequently appearing in a very different light when taken in a general view, which is the only view that I can pretend to have taken of them, and when considered in detail.

"Mr. Ward, when he mentions the definitions which different authors have given of nouns substantive, takes no notice of that of the Abbé Girard, the author of a book called *Les vrais Principes de la Langue Française*, which made me think it might be possible he had not seen it. It is a book which first set me a thinking upon these subjects, and I have received more instruction from it than from any other I have yet seen upon them. If Mr. Ward has not seen it, I have it at his service. The grammatical articles, too, in the French *Encyclopédie* have

* [Probably William Ward, A.M., master of the Grammar School of Beverley, Yorkshire, who, among other grammatical works, published *An Essay on Grammar as it may be applied to the English Language, in two Treatises*, &c., 4to. 1765, which is perhaps the most philosophical Essay on the English language extant.]

given me a good deal of entertainment. Very probably Mr. Ward has seen both these works, and, as he may have considered the subject more than I have done, may think less of them. Remember me to Mrs. Baird, and Mr. Oswald; and believe me to be, with great truth, dear Sir, sincerely yours,

(Signed) "ADAM SMITH."*]

[NOTE E, p. 45.

I ought to have mentioned, among the number of Mr. Smith's friends at Paris, the Abbé Morellet, of whom I have frequently heard him speak with much respect. But his name, with which I was not then very well acquainted, happened to escape my recollection while writing this *Memoir;* nor was I at all aware that they had been so well known to each other, as I have since learned that they were. On this subject I might quote the Abbé Morellet himself, of whom I had the pleasure to see much in the year 1806; but I prefer a reference to his own words, which coincide exactly with what he stated to myself. "J'avais connu Smith dans un voyage qu'il avait fait en France, vers 1762; il parlait fort mal notre langue; mais *La Théorie des Sentimens Moraux*, publiée en 1758, m'avait donné une grande idée de sa sagacité et de sa profondeur. Et véritablement je le regarde encore aujourd'hui comme un des hommes qui a fait les observations et les analyses les plus complètes dans toutes les questions qu'il a traitées. M. Turgot, qui aimait ainsi que moi la métaphysique, estimait beaucoup son talent. Nous le vîmes plusieurs fois; il fut présenté chez Helvetius; nous parlâmes de la théorie commerciale, banque, crédit public, et de plusieurs points du grand ouvrage qu'il méditait."—*Mémoires de l'Abbé Morellet*, Tome I. p. 257, (Paris, 1821.)†]

NOTE F, p. 46.

The *Theory of Moral Sentiments* does not seem to have attracted so much notice in France as might have been expected, till after the publication of the *Wealth of Nations*. Mr. Smith used to ascribe this in part to the Abbé Blavet's translation, which he thought was but indifferently executed. A better reason, however, may perhaps be found in the low and stationary condition of Ethical and Metaphysical Science in that country, previous to the publication of the *Encyclopédie*. On this head I beg leave to transcribe a few sentences from an anonymous paper of his own, printed in the *Edinburgh Review* for the year 1755. The remarks contained in them, so far as they are admitted to be just, tend strongly to confirm an observation which I have elsewhere quoted from D'Alembert, with respect to the literary taste of his countrymen.[1]

"The original and inventive genius of the English has not only discovered itself in Natural Philosophy, but in Morals, Metaphysics, and part of the abstract sciences. Whatever attempts have been made in modern times towards improvement in this contentious and unprosperous Philosophy, beyond what the Ancients have left us, have been made in England. The meditations of Descartes excepted, I know nothing in French that aims at being original on that subject; for the Philosophy of M. Regis, as well as that of Father Malebranche, are but refinements on

* [From *Author's last additions.*]

† [Ibid.]

[1] See *Philosophical Essays*, pp. 110, 111, [Part I. Essay iii., *supra*, *Works*, Vol. V. p. 126.]

the meditations of Descartes. But Mr. Hobbes, Mr. Locke, and Dr. Mandeville, Lord Shaftesbury, Dr. Butler, Dr. Clarke, and Mr. Hutcheson, have all of them, according to their different and inconsistent systems, endeavoured at least to be, in some measure, original, and to add something to that stock of observations with which the world had been furnished before them. This branch of the English Philosophy, which seems now to be entirely neglected by the English themselves, has, *of late*, been transported into France. I observe some traces of it, not only in the *Encyclopédie*, but in the *Theory of Agreeable Sentiments*, by M. de Pouilly, a work that is in many respects original; and above all, in the late *Discourse upon the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality amongst Mankind*, by M. Rousseau of Geneva."

A new translation of Mr. Smith's *Theory*, (including his last additions,) was published at Paris in 1798, by Madame de Condorcet, with some ingenious letters on Sympathy annexed to it, written by the translator.

NOTE G, p. 53.

By way of explanation of what is hinted at in the footnote, p. 53, I think it proper for me *now* to add, that at the period when this Memoir was read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh, it was not unusual, even among men of some talents and information, to confound, studiously, the speculative doctrines of Political Economy, with those discussions concerning the first principles of Government which happened unfortunately at that time to agitate the public mind. The doctrine of a Free Trade was itself represented as of a revolutionary tendency; and some who had formerly prided themselves on their intimacy with Mr. Smith, and on their zeal for the propagation of his liberal system, began to call in question the expediency of subjecting to the disputations of philosophers, the arcana of State Policy, and the unfathomable wisdom of the feudal ages. In reprinting this Section at present, I have, from obvious motives, followed scrupulously the text of the first edition, without any alterations or additions whatsoever, reserving any comments and criticisms which I have to offer on Mr. Smith's work, for a different publication. (1810.)

NOTE H, p. 66.

Notwithstanding the unqualified praise I have bestowed, in the text, on Mr. Smith's arrangement, I readily admit that some of his incidental discussions and digressions might have been more skilfully and happily incorporated with his general design. Little stress, however, will be laid on blemishes of this sort, by those who are aware of the extreme difficulty of giving anything like a systematic shape to researches so various, and, at first view, so unconnected, as his plan embraces: some of them having for their aim to establish abstract principles of universal application, and others bearing a particular reference to the circumstances and policy of our own country.—It ought to be remembered, besides, how much our taste, in matters of arrangement, is liable to be influenced by our individual habits of thought, by the accidental conduct of our early studies, and by other circumstances which may be expected to present the same objects under different aspects to different inquirers. Something of this kind is experienced even in those

more exact Sciences, where the whole business of an elementary writer is to state known and demonstrated truths, in a logical and pleasing series. It has been experienced most remarkably in pure Geometry, the elements of which have been modelled into a hundred different forms by the first mathematicians of modern Europe; while none of them has yet been able to unite the suffrages of the public in favour of any one arrangement as indisputably the best. What allowances, then, are those entitled to, who, venturing upon a vast and untrodden field, aspire to combine with the task of original speculation, a systematical regard to luminous method, if they should sometimes happen to mistake the historical order of their own conclusions for the natural procedure of the human understanding!

Note I, p. 67.*

When this Memoir was first written, I was not fully aware to what an extent the French Economists had been anticipated in some of their most important conclusions, by writers (chiefly British) of a much earlier date. I had often, indeed, been struck with the coincidence between their reasonings concerning the advantages of their territorial tax, and Mr. Locke's speculations on the same subject, in one of his Political Discourses published sixty years before, as well as with the coincidence of their argument against corporations and exclusive companies, with what had been urged at a still earlier period, by the celebrated John de Witt, by Sir Josiah Child, by John Cary of Bristol, and by various other speculative men, who appeared in the latter part of the seventeenth century. To these last writers, my attention had been directed by some quotations and references of the Abbé Morellet, in his very able *Memoir on the East India Company of France*, printed in 1769. Many passages, however, much more full and explicit than those which had fallen in his way, have been pointed out to me by the Earl of Lauderdale, in his curious and valuable collection of rare English Tracts relating to Political Economy. In some of these, the argument is stated in a manner so clear and so conclusive, as to render it surprising, that truths of which the public has been so long in possession, should have been so completely overborne by prejudice and misrepresentation, as to have had, to a large proportion of readers, the appearance of novelty and paradox, when revived in the philosophical theories of the present age.[1]

The system of Political Economy which professes to regulate the commercial intercourse of different nations, and which Mr. Smith has distinguished by the title of the Commercial or Mercantile System, had its root in prejudices still more inveterate than those which restrained the freedom of commerce and industry among the members of the same community. It was supported not only by the

* [In regard to Adam Smith's originality on various points of Political Economy, I may refer, in general, to Vols. VIII. and IX. of this edition, in which Mr. Stewart's *Lectures* on this science are contained. See also in Vol. IX., art. *Smith, Adam, &c.*, of the *Index*.]

[1] That the writers of this Island should have had the start of those in the greater part of Europe, in adopting enlightened ideas concerning Commerce, will not appear surprising, when we consider that "according to the Common Law of England, the freedom of trade is the birthright of the subject." For the opinions of Lord Coke and of Lord Chief-Justice Fortescue, on this point, see a Pamphlet by Lord Lauderdale, entitled, *Hints to the Manufacturers of Great Britain*, &c., (printed in 1805,) where also may be found a list of statutes containing recognitions and declarations of the above principle.

prejudices with which all innovations have to contend, and by the talents of very powerful bodies of men interested to defend it, but by the mistaken and clamorous patriotism of many good citizens, and their blind hostility to supposed enemies or rivals abroad. The absurd and delusive principles, too, formerly so prevalent, with respect to the nature of national wealth, and the essential importance of a favourable balance of trade, (principles which, though now so clearly and demonstrably exploded by the arguments of Mr. Smith, must be acknowledged to fall in naturally, and almost inevitably, with the first apprehensions of the mind when it begins to speculate concerning the Theory of Commerce,) communicated to the Mercantile System a degree of plausibility, against which the most acute reasoners of our own times are not always sufficiently on their guard. It was accordingly, at a considerably later period, that the wisdom of its maxims came to be the subject of general discussion; and, even at this day, the controversy to which the discussion gave rise cannot be said to be completely settled to the satisfaction of all parties. A few enlightened individuals, however, in different parts of Europe, very early got a glimpse of the truth,[1] and it is but justice, that the scattered hints which they threw out should be treasured up as materials for literary history. I have sometimes thought of attempting a slight sketch on that subject myself; but am not without hopes that this suggestion may have the effect of recommending the task to some abler hand. At present, I shall only quote one or two paragraphs from a pamphlet published in 1734, by Jacob Vanderlint,[2] an author whose name has been frequently referred to of late years, but whose book never seems to have attracted much notice till long after the publication of the *Wealth of Nations*. He describes himself, in his Preface, as an *ordinary tradesman, from whom the conciseness and accuracy of a scholar* is not to be expected; and yet the following passages will bear a comparison, both in point of good sense and of liberality, with what was so ably urged by Mr. Hume twenty years afterwards, in his *Essay on the Jealousy of Trade*.

"All nations have some commodities peculiar to them, which, therefore, are undoubtedly designed to be the foundation of commerce between the several nations, and produce a great deal of maritime employment for mankind, which probably, without such peculiarities, could not be; and in this respect, I suppose, we are distinguished as well as other nations; and I have before taken notice, that if one nation be by nature more distinguished in this respect than another, as they will, by that means, gain more money than such other nations, so the prices of all their commodities and labour will be higher in such proportion, and consequently, they will not be richer or more powerful for having more money than their neighbours.

[1] According to the statement of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, the following doctrine was delivered in the English House of Commons by Sir Thomas More, (then speaker,) almost three centuries ago. "I say confidently, you need not fear this penury or scarceness of money, the intercourse of things being so established throughout the whole world, that there is a perpetual derivation of all that can be necessary to mankind. Thus, your commodities will ever find out money; while, not to go far, I shall produce our own merchants only, who (let me assure you) will be always as glad of your corn and cattle, as you can be of anything they bring you."—*The Life and Reign of King Henry the Eighth*, London, 1672, p. 135.

It is not a little discouraging to reflect, that the mercantile prejudice here combated by this great man, has not yet yielded entirely to all the philosophical lights of the 18th century.

[2] *Money Answers all Things*, &c. &c. London, 1734.

"But if we import any kind of goods cheaper than we can now raise them, which otherwise might be as well raised at home, in this case, undoubtedly, we ought to attempt to raise such commodities, and thereby furnish so many new branches of employment and trade for our own people, and remove the inconvenience of receiving any goods from abroad, which we can anywise raise on as good terms ourselves; and, as this should be done to prevent every nation from finding their account with us by any such commodities whatsoever, so this would more effectually shut out all such foreign goods than any law can do.

"And as this is all the prohibitions and restraints whereby any foreign trade should be obstructed, so if this method were observed, our gentry would find themselves the richer, notwithstanding their consumption of such other foreign goods, as, being the peculiarities of other nations, we may be obliged to import. For if, when we have thus raised all we can at home, the goods we import after this is done be cheaper than we can raise such goods ourselves, (which they must be, otherwise we shall not import them,) it is plain, the consumption of any such goods cannot occasion so great an expense as they would, if we could shut them out by an Act of Parliament, in order to raise them ourselves.

"From hence, therefore, it must appear, that it is impossible anybody should be poorer, for using any foreign goods at cheaper rates than we can raise them ourselves, after we have done all we possibly can to raise such goods as cheap as we import them, and find we cannot do it; nay, this very circumstance makes all such goods come under the character of the *peculiarities* of those countries which are able to raise any such goods cheaper than we can do, for they will necessarily operate as such."[1]

The same author, in another part of his work, quotes from Erasmus Philips, a maxim which he calls *a glorious one:* "That a trading nation should be an open warehouse, where the merchant may buy what he pleases, and sell what he can. Whatever is brought to you, if you don't want it, you won't purchase it; if you do want it, the largeness of the impost don't keep it from you."

"All nations of the world, therefore," says Vanderlint, "should be regarded as one body of tradesmen, exercising their various occupations for the mutual benefit and advantage of each other."[2] "I will not contend," he adds, evidently in compliance with national prejudices, "I will not contend for a free and unrestrained trade with respect to France, though I can't see it could do us any harm even in that case."[3]

In these last sentences, an argument is suggested for a free commerce all over the globe, founded on the same principle on which Mr. Smith has demonstrated the beneficial effects of a division and distribution of labour among the members of the same community. The happiness of the whole race would, in fact, be promoted by the former arrangement, in a manner exactly analogous to that in which the comforts of a particular nation are multiplied by the latter.

In the same *Essay*, Mr. Vanderlint, following the footsteps of Locke, maintains with considerable ingenuity, the noted doctrine of the Economists, that all taxes fall ultimately on land, and recommends the substitution of a land-tax, in place of those complicated fiscal regulations which have been every where adopted by the

[1] Pp. 97-99 [2] P. 42. [3] P. 45

statesmen of modern Europe, and which, while they impoverish and oppress the people, do not, in the same degree, enrich the sovereign.[1]

The doctrine which more exclusively distinguishes this celebrated sect, is neither that of the freedom of trade, nor of the territorial tax, (on both of which topics they had been, in part, anticipated by English writers,) but what they have so ingeniously and forcibly urged, with respect to the tendency of the existing regulations and restraints, to encourage the industry of towns in preference to that of the country. To revive the languishing agriculture of France was the first and the leading aim of their speculations; and it is impossible not to admire the metaphysical acuteness and subtlety with which all their various discussions are so combined as to bear systematically upon this favourite object. The influence of their labours in turning the attention of French statesmen, under the old monarchy, to the encouragement of this essential branch of national industry, was remarked by Mr. Smith more than thirty years ago; nor has it altogether ceased to operate in the same direction, under all the violent and fantastic metamorphoses which the government of that country has since exhibited.[2]

In combating the policy of commercial privileges, and in asserting the reciprocal advantages of a free-trade among different nations, the founders of the Economical sect candidly acknowledged, from the beginning, that their first lights were borrowed from England. The testimony of M. Turgot upon this point is so perfectly decisive, that I hope to gratify some of my readers (in the present interrupted state of our communication with the Continent) by the following quotations from a Memoir, which, till lately, was very little known even in France. They are transcribed from his *Eloge on M. Vincent de Gournay*, a name which has always been united with that of Quesnai by the French writers who have attempted to trace the origin and progress of the *now* prevailing opinions on this branch of legislation.[3]

" Jean-Claude-Marie Vincent, Seigneur De Gournay, &c., est mort à Paris le 27 Juin dernier (1759), âgé de quarante sept ans.

" Il étoit né à Saint-Malo, au mois de Mai 1712, de Claude Vincent, l'un des plus considérables négocians de cette ville, et secrétaire du roi.

" Ses parens le destinèrent au commerce, et l'envoyèrent à Cadix en 1729, à peine âgé de dix sept ans."[4]

[1] Lord Lauderdale has traced some hints of what are commonly considered as the peculiarities of the Economical system, in various British publications now almost forgotten. The following extract, from a *Treatise* published by Mr. Asgill, in 1696, breathes the very spirit of Quesnai's philosophy.

" What we call commodities is nothing but land severed from the soil. Man deals in nothing but earth. The merchants are the factors of the world, to exchange one part of the earth for another. The king himself is fed by the labour of the ox; and the clothing of the army, and victualling of the navy, must all be paid for to the owner of the soil as the ultimate receiver. All things in the world are originally the produce of the ground, and there must all things be raised."—*Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Public Wealth*, p. 113.

The title of Asgill's Treatise is, *Several Assertions proved, in order to create another Species of Money than Gold.* Its object was to support Dr. Chamberlayne's proposition for a Land Bank, which he laid before the English House of Commons in 1693, and before the Scottish Parliament in 1703.

[2] It is but justice to the Economists to add, that they have laid more stress than any other class of writers whatsoever, on the principles of Political Economy, considered in their connexion with the intellectual and moral character of a people.

[3] *Œuvres de M. Turgot*, Tome III. Paris, 1808. [4] P. 321.

" Aux lumières que M. de Gournay tiroit de sa propre expérience et de ses reflexions, il joignit la lecture des meilleurs ouvrages que possèdent sur cette matière les différentes nations de l'Europe, *et en particulier la nation Angloise, la plus riche de toutes en ce genre, et dont il s'étoit rendu, pour cette raison, la langue familière.* Les ouvrages qu'il lut avec plus de plaisir, et dont il goûta le plus la doctrine, furent les traités du fameux Josias Child, qu'il a traduits depuis en François, et les mémoires du Grand Pensionnaire Jean de Witt. On sait que ces deux grands hommes sont considérés, l'un en Angleterre, l'autre en Hollande, comme les législateurs du commerce: que leurs principes sont devenus les principes nationaux, et que l'observation de ces principes est regardée comme une des sources de la prodigieuse supériorité que ces deux nations ont acquise dans le commerce sur toutes les autres puissances. M. de Gournay trouvoit sans cesse dans la pratique d'un commerce étendu la vérification de ces principes simples et lumineux, il se les rendoit propres sans prévoir qu'il étoit destiné à en répandre un jour la lumière en France, et à mériter de sa patrie le même tribut de reconnoissance, que l'Angleterre et la Hollande rendent à la mémoire de ces deux bienfaiteurs de leur nation et de l'humanité."[1]

" M. de Gournay, après avoir quitté l'Espagne, prit la résolution d'employer quelques années à voyager dans les différentes parties de l'Europe, soit pour augmenter ses connoissances, soit pour étendre ses correspondances et former des liaisons avantageuses pour le commerce, qu'il se proposoit de continuer. Il voyagea à Hambourg; il parcourut la Hollande et l'Angleterre; partout il faisoit des observations et rassembloit des mémoires sur l'état du commerce et de la marine, et sur les principes d'administration adoptés par ces différentes nations relativement à ces grands objets. Il entretenoit pendant ses voyages une correspondance suivie avec M. de Maurepas, auquel il faisoit part des lumières qu'il recueilloit."[2]

" M. de Gournay acheta, en 1749, une charge de conseiller au grand conseil; et une place d'intendant du commerce étant venue à vâquer au commencement de 1751, M. de Machault, à qui le mérite de M. de Gournay étoit très-connu, la lui fit donner. C'est de ce moment que la vie de M. de Gournay devint celle d'un homme public: son entrée au Bureau du commerce parut être l'époque d'une révolution. M. de Gournay, dans une pratique de vingt ans du commerce le plus étendu et le plus varié, *dans la fréquentation des plus habiles négocians de Hollande et d'Angleterre, dans la lecture des auteurs les plus estimés de ces deux nations, dans l'observation attentive des causes de leur étonnante prospérité,* s'étoit fait des principes qui parurent nouveaux à quelques-uns des magistrats qui composoient le Bureau du Commerce."[3]

" M. de Gournay n'ignoroit pas que plusieurs des abus auxquels il s'opposoit, avoient été autrefois établis dans une grande partie de l'Europe, et qu'il en restoit même encore des vestiges en Angleterre: mais il savoit aussi que le gouvernement Anglois en avoit détruit une partie; que s'il en restoit encore quelques-unes, bien loin de les adopter comme des établissemens utiles, il cherchoit à les restreindre, à les empêcher de s'étendre, et ne les toléroit encore, que parceque la constitution républicaine met quelquefois des obstacles à la réformation de certains abus, lorsque ces abus ne peuvent être corrigés que par une autorité dont l'exercice le plus avantageux au peuple excite toujours sa défiance. *Il savoit enfin que depuis un*

[1] Pp. 324, 325. [2] Pp. 325, 326. [3] Pp. 327, 328.

siècle toutes les personnes éclairées, soit en Hollande, soit en Angleterre, regardoient ces abus comme des restes de la barbarie Gothique et de la foiblesse de tous les gouvernemens qui n'avoient ni connu l'importance de la liberté publique, ni su la protéger des invasions de l'esprit monopoleur et de l'intérêt particulier.[1]

" M. de Gournay avoit fait et vu faire, pendant vingt ans, le plus grand commerce de l'univers sans avoir eu occasion d'apprendre autrement que par les livres l'existence de toutes ces loix auxquelles il voyoit attacher tant d'importance, et il ne croyoit point alors qu'on le prendroit pour un *novateur* et un *homme à systèmes*, lorsqu'il ne feroit que développer les principes que l'expérience lui avoit enseignés, et qu'il voyoit universellement reconnus par les négocians les plus éclairés avec lesquels il vivoit.

" Ces principes, qu'on qualifioit de *système nouveau*, ne lui paroissoient que les maximes du plus simple bon sens. Tout ce prétendu *système* étoit appuyé sur cette maxime, qu'en général tout homme connoit mieux son propre intérêt qu'un autre homme à qui cet intérêt est entièrement indifférent.[2]

" De là M. de Gournay concluoit, que lorsque l'intérêt des particuliers est précisément le même que l'intérêt général, ce qu'on peut faire de mieux est de laisser chaque homme libre de faire ce qu'il veut. Or il trouvoit impossible que dans le commerce abandonné à lui-même, l'intérêt particulier ne concourût pas avec l'intérêt général."[3]

In mentioning M. de Gournay's opinion on the subject of taxation, M. Turgot does not take any notice of the source from which he derived it. But on *this* head (whatever may be thought of the justness of that opinion) there can be no doubt among those who are acquainted with the writings of Locke and of Vanderlint.

[1] Some of these liberal principles found their way into France before the end of the seventeenth century.—See a very curious book entitled, *Le Détail de la France sous le Règne Présent*. The first edition (which I have never met with) appeared in 1698 or 1699; the second was printed in 1707. Both editions are anonymous, but the author is well known to have been M. de Bois-Guilbert, to whom Voltaire has also (erroneously) ascribed the *Projet d'une dixme Royale*, published in the name of the Maréchal de Vauban.—See the *Ephémérides du Citoyen* for the year 1769, Tome IX. pp. 12, 13.

The fortunate expression, *laissez nous faire*, which an old merchant (Le Gendre) is said to have used in a conversation with Colbert; and the still more significant maxim of the Marquis d'Argenson, *pas trop gouverner*, are indebted chiefly for that proverbial celebrity which they have now acquired, to the accidental lustre reflected upon them by the discussions of more modern times. They must, at the same time, be allowed to evince in their authors, a clear perception of the importance of a problem, which Mr. Burke has somewhere pronounced to be " *one of the finest in legislation;—to ascertain, what the state ought to take upon itself to direct by the public wisdom, and what it ought to leave, with as little interference as possible, to individual discretion.*" The solution of this problem, in some of its most interesting cases, may be regarded as one of the principal objects of Mr. Smith's *Inquiry*; and, among the many happy changes which that work has gradually produced in prevailing opinions, none is, perhaps, of greater consequence, than its powerful effect in discrediting that empirical spirit of tampering Regulation, which the multitude is so apt to mistake for the provident sagacity of political experience.

[2] I have endeavoured, in a former work, to vindicate, upon the very same principle, some of Mr. Smith's political speculations against the charge of being founded rather on theory than on actual experience. I was not aware, till very lately, that this view of the subject had been sanctioned by such high authorities as M. de Gournay and M. Turgot.—See *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, pp. 254-256, 3d edit. [chap. iv. § 8; *supra*, *Works*, Vol. II. p. 235, *seq.*]

[3] Pp. 334-336.

"Il pensoit," says Turgot, "que tous les impôts, sont en dernière analyse, toujours payés par le propriétaire, qui vend d'autant moins les produits de sa terre, et que si tous les impôts étoient répartis sur les fonds, les propriétaires et le royaume y gagneroient tout ce qu'absorbent les fraix de régie, tout la consommation ou l'emploi stérile des hommes perdus, soit à percevoir les impôts, soit à faire la contrebande, soit à l'empêcher, sans compter la prodigieuse augmentation des richesses et des valeurs résultantes de l'augmentation du commerce."[1]

In a note upon this passage by the Editor, this project of a territorial tax, together with that of a free-trade, are mentioned among the most important points in which Gournay and Quesnai agreed perfectly together;[2] and it is not a little curious, that the same two doctrines should have been combined together as parts of the same system, in the Treatise of Vanderlint, published almost twenty years before.[3]

It does not appear from Turgot's account of M. de Gournay, that any of his original works were ever published, nor have I heard that he was known even in the capacity of a translator, prior to 1752. "Il eut le bonheur," says M. Turgot, "de rencontrer dans M. Trudaine, le même amour de la vérité et du bien public qui l'animoit; comme il n'avoit encore développé ses principes que par occasion, dans la discussion des affaires ou dans la conversation, M. Trudaine l'engagea à donner comme une espèce de corps de sa doctrine; et c'est dans cette vue qu'il a traduit, en 1752, les traités sur le commerce et sur l'intérêt de l'argent, de Josias Child et de Thomas Culpepper."[4] I quote this passage, because it enables me to correct an inaccuracy in point of dates, which has escaped the learned and ingenious writer to whom we are indebted for the first complete edition which has yet appeared of Turgot's works. After dividing the Economists into two schools, that of Gournay and that of Quesnai, he classes under the former denomination (among some other very illustrious names) Mr. David Hume, whose *Political Discourses*, I must take the liberty of remarking, were published as early as 1752, the very year when M. de Gournay published his *Translations* of Child and of Culpepper.

The same writer afterwards adds:—"Entre ces deux écoles, profitant de l'une et de l'autre, mais évitant avec soin de paroître tenir à aucune, se sont élevés quel-

[1] Pp. 350, 351.

[2] Ceci est, avec la liberté du commerce et du travail, un des principaux points sur lesquels M. de Gournay et M. Quesnai ont été complettement d'accord.

[3] I have already quoted, from Vanderlint, his opinion about the freedom of trade. His ideas with respect to taxation I shall also state in his own words:—"I can't dismiss this head without shewing, that if all the taxes were taken off goods, and levied on lands and houses only, the gentlemen would have more *rent* left out of their estates, than they have now when the taxes are almost wholly levied on goods." For his argument in proof of this proposition, see his *Essay on Money*, p. 109, *et seq.* See also Locke's *Considerations on the Lowering of Interest and Raising the Value of Money*, published in 1691.

As to the *discovery* (as it has been called) of the *luminous distinction between the "produit total" and the "produit net de la culture,"*[1] it is not worth while to dispute about its author. Whatever merit this theory of taxation may possess, the whole credit of it evidently belongs to those who first proposed the doctrine stated in the foregoing paragraph. The calculations of M. Quesnai, however interesting and useful they may have appeared in a country where so great a proportion of the territory was cultivated by *Métayers* or *Coloni Partiarii*, cannot surely be considered as throwing any new light on the general principles of Political Economy.

[4] P. 354.

[1] See the *Ephemerides du Citoyen* for the year 1769, Tome I. pp. 13, 25, and 26, and Tome IX. p. 9.

ques philosophes éclectiques, à la tête desquels il faut placer M. Turgot, l'Abbé de Condillac, et le célèbre Adam Smith; et parmi lesquels on doit compter très-honorablement le traducteur de celui-ci, M. le Sénateur Germain Garnier, en Angleterre my Lord Lansdowne, à Paris M. Say, à Genève M. Simonde."

How far Mr. Smith has availed himself of the writings of the Economists in his *Wealth of Nations*, it is not my present business to examine. All that I wish to establish is, his indisputable claim to the same opinions which he professed in common with them, several years before the names of either Gournay or of Quesnai were at all heard of in the republic of letters.

With respect to a very distinguished and enlightened English statesman, who is here included along with Mr. Smith among the *eclectic* disciples of Gournay and of Quesnai, I am enabled to state, from his own authority, the accidental circumstance which first led him into this train of thought. In a letter which I had the honour to receive from his Lordship in 1795, he expresses himself thus:—

"I owe to a journey I made with Mr. Smith from Edinburgh to London, the difference between light and darkness through the best part of my life. The novelty of his principles, added to my youth and prejudices, made me unable to comprehend them at the time, but he urged them with so much benevolence, as well as eloquence, that they took a certain hold, which, though it did not develop itself so as to arrive at full conviction for some few years after, I can fairly say, has constituted ever since, the happiness of my life, as well as any little consideration I may have enjoyed in it."

As the current of public opinion, at a particular period, (or at least the prevailing habits of study,) may be pretty accurately judged of by the books which were *then* chiefly in demand, it may be worth mentioning, before I conclude this Note, that in the year 1751, (the same year in which Mr. Smith was promoted to his professorship,) several of our choicest tracts on subjects connected with Political Economy were republished by Robert and Andrew Foulis, printers to the University of Glasgow. A book of Mr. Law's, entitled, *Proposals and Reasons for constituting a Council of Trade in Scotland*, &c., reprinted in that year, is now lying before me, from which it appears, that the following works had recently issued from the University press:—Child's *Discourse of Trade;* Law's *Essay on Money and Trade;* Gee's *Trade and Navigation of Great Britain considered;* and Berkeley's *Querist.* In the same list, Sir William Petty's *Political Arithmetic* is advertised as being then *in the press.*

Mr. Smith's Lectures, it must be remembered, (to the fame of which he owed his appointment at Glasgow,) were read at Edinburgh as early as 1748.

Note K, p. 69.

Among the questionable doctrines to which Mr. Smith has lent the sanction of his name, there is perhaps none that involves so many important consequences as the opinion he has maintained concerning the expediency of legal restrictions on the rate of interest. The inconclusiveness of his reasoning on this point, has been evinced with a singular degree of logical acuteness, by Mr. Bentham, in a short treatise, entitled *A Defence of Usury;* a performance to which (notwithstanding the long interval that has elapsed since the date of its publication) I do not know

that any answer has yet been attempted; and which a late writer, eminently acquainted with the operations of commerce, has pronounced (and, in my opinion, with great truth) to be "perfectly unanswerable."[1] It is a remarkable circumstance, that Mr. Smith should, in this solitary instance, have adopted on such slight grounds, a conclusion so strikingly contrasted with the general spirit of his political discussions, and so manifestly at variance with the fundamental principles which, on other occasions, he has so boldly followed out through all their practical applications. This is the more surprising, as the French Economists had, a few years before, obviated the most plausible objections which are apt to present themselves against this extension of the doctrine of Commercial Freedom. See, in particular, some observations in M. Turgot's *Reflections on the Formation and Distribution of Riches;* and a separate Essay, by the same author, entitled, *Mémoire sur le Prêt à Intérêt, et sur le Commerce des Fers.*[2]

Upon this particular question, however, as well as upon those mentioned in the preceding Note, I must be allowed to assert the prior claims of our own countrymen to those of the Economists. From a Memoir presented by the celebrated Mr. Law, (before his elevation to the ministry,) to the Regent Duke of Orleans, that very ingenious writer appears to have held the same opinion with M. Turgot; and the arguments he employs in support of it are expressed with that clearness and conciseness which, in general, distinguish his compositions. The Memoir to which I refer is to be found in a French work entitled, *Recherches et Considérations sur les Finances de France, depuis* 1595 *jusqu'en* 1721.[3] In the same volume, this doctrine is ascribed by the editor to Mr. Law as its author, or, at least, as its first broacher in France. "*Une opinion apportée en France pour la première fois par M. Law*, c'est que l'état ne doit jamais donner de réglemens sur le taux de l'intérêt."[4]

To this opinion Law appears evidently to have been led by Locke, whose reasonings (although he himself declares in favour of a legal rate of interest) seem, all of them, to point at the opposite conclusion. Indeed, the apology he suggests for the existing regulations is so trifling and so slightly urged, that one would almost suppose he was prevented merely by a respect for established prejudices, from pushing his argument to its full extent. The passage I allude to, considering the period when it was written, does no small credit to Locke's sagacity.[5]

I would not have entered here into the historical details contained in the two last Notes, if I had not been anxious to obviate the effect of that weak but invete-

[1] Sir Francis Baring. Pamphlet *On the Bank of England.*

[2] In an Essay read before a literary society in Glasgow, some years before the publication of the *Wealth of Nations*, Dr. Reid disputed the expediency of legal restrictions on the rate of interest, founding his opinion on some of the same considerations which were afterwards so forcibly stated by Mr. Bentham. His attention had probably been attracted to this question by a very weak defence of these restrictions in Sir James Steuart's *Political Œconomy*, a book which had then been recently published, and which (though he differed widely from many of its doctrines) he was accustomed, in his academical lectures, to recommend warmly to his students. It was indeed the only systematical work on the subject that had appeared in our language previous to Mr. Smith's *Inquiry.*

[3] See Vol. VI. p. 181, edit. printed at Liege, 1758.

[4] P. 64.

[5] See the folio edition of his Works, Vol. II. p. 31, *et seq.*

rate prejudice which shuts the eyes of so many against the most manifest and important truths, when they are supposed to proceed from an obnoxious quarter. The leading opinions which the French Economists embodied and systematized were, in fact, all of British origin; and most of them follow as necessary consequences, from a maxim of natural law, which (according to Lord Coke) is identified with the first principles of English jurisprudence. "*La loi de la liberté entière de tout commerce est un corollaire du droit de propriété.*"

The truly exceptionable part of the Economical system (as I have elsewhere remarked) is that which relates to the power of the Sovereign. Its original authors and patrons were the decided opposers of political liberty, and, in their zeal for the right of property and the freedom of commerce, lost sight of the only means by which either the one or the other can be effectually protected.

Note L, p. 73.

In the early part of Mr. Smith's life, it is well known to his friends that he was for several years attached to a young lady of great beauty and accomplishment. How far his addresses were favourably received, or what the circumstances were which prevented their union, I have not been able to learn; but I believe it is pretty certain that, after this disappointment, he laid aside all thoughts of marriage. The lady to whom I allude died also unmarried. She survived Mr. Smith for a considerable number of years, and was alive long after the publication of the first edition of this *Memoir*. I had the pleasure of seeing her when she was turned of eighty, and when she still retained evident traces of her former beauty. The powers of her understanding and the gaiety of her temper seemed to have suffered nothing from the hand of time.

P.S.—Soon after the foregoing account of Mr. Smith was read before the Royal Society, a volume of his *Posthumous Essays* was published by his executors and friends, Dr. Black and Dr. Hutton. In this volume are contained three Essays on the Principles which lead and direct Philosophical Inquiries:—illustrated, in the first place, by the History of Astronomy; in the second, by the History of the Ancient Physics; in the third, by the History of the Ancient Logics and Metaphysics. To these are subjoined three other Essays:—on the Imitative Arts; on the Affinity between certain English and Italian Verses; and on the External Senses. "The greater part of them appear" (as is observed in an advertisement subscribed by the Editors) "to be parts of a plan the Author had once formed, for giving a connected history of the liberal sciences and elegant arts."—"This plan" (we are informed by the same authority) "he had long abandoned as far too extensive, and these parts of it lay beside him neglected till his death."

As this posthumous volume did not appear till after the publication of the foregoing *Memoir*, it would be foreign to the design of these Notes to offer any observations on the different Essays which it contains. Their merits were certainly not overrated by the two illustrious editors, when they expressed their

hopes, "that the reader would find in them that happy connexion, that full and accurate expression, and that clear illustration which are conspicuous in the rest of the author's works; and that, though it is difficult to add much to the great fame he so justly acquired by his other writings, these would be read with satisfaction and pleasure." The three first Essays, more particularly the fragment on the History of Astronomy, are perhaps as strongly marked as any of his most finished compositions, with the peculiar characteristics of his rich, original, and comprehensive mind.

In order to obviate a cavil which may possibly occur to some of those readers who were not personally acquainted with Mr. Smith, I shall take this opportunity of mentioning, that in suppressing, through the course of the foregoing narrative, his honorary title of LL.D., (which was conferred on him by the University of Glasgow a very short time before he resigned his professorship,) I have complied not only with his own taste, but with the uniform practice of that circle in which I had the happiness of enjoying his society. To have given him, so soon after his death, a designation which he never assumed but on the title-pages of his books, and by which he is never mentioned in the letters of Mr. Hume and of his other most intimate friends, would have subjected me justly to the charge of affectation from the audience before whom my paper was read; but the truth is, (so little was my ear *then* accustomed to the name of Doctor Smith,) that I was altogether unconscious of the omission till it was pointed out to me, several years afterwards, as a circumstance which, however trifling, had been magnified by more than one critic, into a subject of grave animadversion.

ACCOUNT

OF

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

WILLIAM ROBERTSON, D.D.

LATE PRINCIPAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH, AND HISTORIOGRAPHER TO HIS MAJESTY FOR SCOTLAND.

[READ BEFORE THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH, MARCH 21, 1796.]

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE principal authorities for the biographical details in the following pages, were communicated to me by Dr. Robertson's eldest son, Mr. William Robertson, Advocate.[1] To him I am indebted, not only for the original letters with which he has enabled me to gratify the curiosity of my readers, but for every other aid which he could be prompted to contribute, either by regard for his father's memory, or by friendship for myself.

My information with respect to the earlier part of Dr. Robertson's life, was derived almost entirely from one of his oldest and most valued friends, the Rev. Dr. Carlyle of Inveresk.

It is proper for me to add, that this Memoir was read at different meetings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh; and was destined for a place in their *Transactions*. The length to which it has extended, suggested the idea of a separate publication, and the addition of an Appendix.

During the long interval which has elapsed since it was composed, a few sentences have been occasionally inserted, in which a reference is made to later criticisms on Dr. Robertson's writings. I mention this circumstance, in order to account for some slight anachronisms.

16*th May*, 1801.

[1] [Now one of the Senators of the College of Justice, under the title of Lord Robertson.]

ACCOUNT

OF

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

WILLIAM ROBERTSON, D.D.

SECTION I.

FROM DR. ROBERTSON'S BIRTH TILL THE PUBLICATION OF HIS HISTORY OF SCOTLAND.

WILLIAM ROBERTSON, D.D., late Principal of the University of Edinburgh, and Historiographer to his Majesty for Scotland, was the son of the Rev. William Robertson, Minister of the Old Greyfriars' Church, and of Eleanor Pitcairn, daughter of David Pitcairn, Esq. of Dreghorn. By his father he was descended from the Robertsons of Gladney, in the county of Fife; a branch of the respectable family of the same name, which has, for many generations, possessed the estate of Struan in Perthshire.

He was born in 1721, at Borthwick, (in the county of Mid-Lothian,) where his father was then Minister; and received the first rudiments of his education at the school of Dalkeith, which, from the high reputation of Mr. Leslie as a teacher, was at that time resorted to from all parts of Scotland. In 1733, he again joined his father's family on their removal to Edinburgh; and, towards the end of the same year, he entered on his course of academical study.

From this period till the year 1759, when, by the publication of his *Scottish History*, he fixed a new era in the literary annals of his country, the habits and occurrences of his life were such as to supply few materials for Biography; and the imagination is left to fill up a long interval spent in the silent pursuit of letters, and enlivened by the secret anticipation of future eminence. His genius was not of that forward and irregular growth which forces itself prematurely on public notice; and it was only a few intimate and discerning friends, who, in the native vigour of his powers, and in the patient culture by which he laboured to improve them, perceived the earnests of a fame that was to last for ever.

The large proportion of Dr. Robertson's life which he thus devoted to obscurity will appear the more remarkable, when contrasted with his early and enthusiastic love of study. Some of his oldest commonplace books, still in his son's possession, (dated in the years 1735, 1736, and 1737,) bear marks of a persevering assiduity, unexampled perhaps at so tender an age; and the motto prefixed to all of them, "*Vita sine literis mors est*," attests how soon those views and sentiments were formed, which, to his latest hour, continued to guide and to dignify his ambition. In times such as the present, when literary distinction leads to other rewards, the labours of the studious are often prompted by motives very different from the hope of fame, or the inspiration of genius; but when Dr. Robertson's career commenced, these were the only incitements which existed to animate his exertions. The trade of authorship was unknown in Scotland; and the rank which that country had early acquired among the learned nations of Europe, had for many years been sustained entirely by a small number of eminent men, who distinguished themselves by an honourable and disinterested zeal in the ungainful walks of abstract science.

Some presages, however, of better times were beginning to appear. The productions of Thomson, of Armstrong, and of Mallet, were already known and admired in the metropolis of England, and an impulse had been given to the minds of the

rising generation, by the exertions of a few able and enlightened men, who filled important stations in the Scottish Universities. Dr. Hutcheson of Glasgow, by his excellent writings, and still more by his eloquent lectures, had diffused among a numerous race of pupils, a liberality of sentiment, and a refinement of taste, unknown before in this part of the island; and the influence of his example had extended, in no inconsiderable degree, to that seminary where Dr. Robertson received his education. The Professorship of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh was then held by Sir John Pringle, afterwards President of the Royal Society of London; who, if he did not rival Dr. Hutcheson's abilities, was not surpassed by him in the variety of his scientific attainments, or in a warm zeal for the encouragement of useful knowledge. His efforts were ably seconded by the learning and industry of Dr. Stevenson, Professor of Logic; to whose valuable prelections (particularly to his illustrations of Aristotle's *Poetics*, and of Longinus on the *Sublime*) Dr. Robertson has been often heard to say, that he considered himself as more deeply indebted, than to any other circumstance in his academical studies. The bent of his genius did not incline him to mathematical or physical pursuits, notwithstanding the strong recommendations they derived from the popular talents of Mr. Maclaurin; but he could not fail to receive advantage from the eloquence with which that illustrious man knew how to adorn the most abstracted subjects, as well as from that correctness and purity in his compositions, which still entitle him to a high rank among our best writers, and which no Scottish author of the same period had been able to attain.

A number of other learned and respectable men, of whose names the greater part now exist in tradition only, were then resident in Edinburgh. A club, or society[1] of these, carried on for some years a private correspondence with Dr. Berkeley, the celebrated Bishop of Cloyne, on the subject of his metaphysical publications; and are said to have been numbered by

[1] Called the *Rankenian* Club, from the name of the person in whose tavern its meetings were held. The learned and ingenious Dr. Wallace, author of the *Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind*, was one of the leading members.

him among the few who completely comprehended the scope of his reasonings against the existence of *matter*. The influence of this society in encouraging that spirit of philosophical research which has since become so fashionable in Scotland, has often been mentioned to me by those who had the best opportunities of observing the rise and progress of Scottish literature.

I have entered into these details, partly as they suggest some circumstances which conspired with Dr. Robertson's natural inclination in fixing his studious habits, and partly as they help to account for the sudden transition which Scotland made, about this period, from the temporary obscurity into which it had sunk, to that station which it has since maintained in the republic of letters. A great stock both of genius and of learning existed in the country; but the difficulty of overcoming the peculiarities of a provincial idiom seemed to shut up every avenue to fame by means of the press, excepting in those departments of science, where the nature of the subject is such as to dispense with the graces of composition.

Dr. Robertson's ambition was not to be checked by these obstacles; and he appears, from a very early period of life, to have employed, with much perseverance, the most effectual means for surmounting them. Among other expedients, he was accustomed to exercise himself in the practice of translation; and he had even gone so far in the cultivation of this very difficult art, as to have thought seriously of preparing for the press a version of *Marcus Antoninus*, when he was anticipated, by an anonymous publication at Glasgow, in the execution of his design. In making choice of this author, he was probably not a little influenced by that partiality with which (among the writings of the heathen moralists) he always regarded the remains of the Stoical philosophy.

Nor was his ambition limited to the attainment of the honours that reward the industry of the recluse student. Anxious to distinguish himself by the utility of his labours in that profession to which he had resolved to devote his talents, and looking forward, it is probable, to the active share he was afterwards to take in the ecclesiastical policy of Scotland, he

aspired to add to the art of classical composition the powers of a persuasive and commanding speaker. With this view, he united with some of his contemporaries, during the last years of his attendance at college, in the formation of a society, where their object was to cultivate the study of elocution, and to prepare themselves, by the habits of extemporary discussion and debate, for conducting the business of popular assemblies. Fortunately for Dr. Robertson, he had here associates to contend with worthy of himself; among others, Dr. William M'Ghie, an ingenious young physician, afterwards well known in London; Mr. William Cleghorn, afterwards Professor of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh; Dr. John Blair, late Prebendary of Westminster; Dr. Wilkie, author of the *Epigoniad;* and Mr. John Home, author of the *Tragedy of Douglas.*

His studies at the University being at length finished, Dr. Robertson was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Dalkeith in 1741, and in 1743 he was presented to the living of Gladsmuir, in East-Lothian, by the Earl of Hopetoun. The income was but inconsiderable, (the whole emoluments not exceeding one hundred pounds a year;) but the preferment, such as it was, came to him at a time singularly fortunate; for, not long afterwards, his father and mother died within a few hours of each other, leaving a family of six daughters and a younger son, in such circumstances as required every aid which his slender funds enabled him to bestow.

Dr. Robertson's conduct in this trying situation, while it bore the most honourable testimony to the generosity of his dispositions, and to the warmth of his affections, was strongly marked with that manly decision in his plans, and that persevering steadiness in their execution, which were characteristical features of his mind. Undeterred by the magnitude of a charge, which must have appeared fatal to the prospects that had hitherto animated his studies, and resolved to sacrifice to a sacred duty all personal considerations, he invited his father's family to Gladsmuir, and continued to educate his sisters under his own roof, till they were settled respectably in the world. Nor did he think himself at liberty, till then, to com-

plete an union, which had been long the object of his wishes, and which may be justly numbered among the most fortunate incidents of his life. He remained single till 1751, when he married his cousin, Miss Mary Nisbet, daughter of the Reverend Mr. Nisbet, one of the ministers of Edinburgh.

While he was thus engaged in the discharge of those pious offices, which had devolved upon him by the sudden death of his parents, the Rebellion of 1745 broke out in Scotland, and afforded him an opportunity of evincing the sincerity of that zeal for the civil and religious liberties of his country, which he had imbibed with the first principles of his education, and which afterwards, at the distance of more than forty years, when he was called on to employ his eloquence in the national commemoration of the Revolution, seemed to rekindle the fires of his youth. His situation as a country clergyman, confined, indeed, his patriotic exertions within a narrow sphere; but even here his conduct was guided by a mind superior to the scene in which he acted. On one occasion, (when the capital of Scotland was in danger of falling into the hands of the rebels,) the state of public affairs appeared so critical, that he thought himself justified in laying aside for a time the pacific habits of his profession, and in quitting his parochial residence at Gladsmuir to join the Volunteers of Edinburgh; and when, at last, it was determined that the city should be surrendered, he was one of the small band who repaired to Haddington and offered their services to the commander of his Majesty's forces.

The duties of his sacred profession were, in the meantime, discharged with a punctuality which secured to him the veneration and attachment of his parishioners, while the eloquence and taste that distinguished him as a preacher, drew the attention of the neighbouring clergy, and prepared the way for that influence in the Church which he afterwards attained. A sermon which he preached in the year 1755, before the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, and which was the earliest of all his publications, affords a sufficient proof of the eminence he might have attained in that species of compo-

sition, if his genius had not inclined him more strongly to other studies. This sermon, the only one he ever published, has been long ranked, in both parts of the island, among the best models of pulpit eloquence in our language. It has undergone five editions, and is well known in some parts of the Continent, in the German translation of Mr. Ebeling.

A few years before this period, he made his first appearance in the debates of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. The questions which were then agitated in that place have long ceased to be interesting; but they were highly important at the time, as they involved, not only the authority of the supreme court of ecclesiastical judicature, but the general tranquillity and good order of the country. The principles which Dr. Robertson held on these subjects, and which have, for many years past, guided the policy of the Church, will again fall under our review, before the conclusion of this narrative. At present, it is sufficient to mention, that in the Assembly of 1751, when he first submitted them to public discussion, they were so contrary to the prevailing ideas, that, although he enforced them with extraordinary powers of argument and eloquence, and was most ably supported by the late Sir Gilbert Elliot and Mr. Andrew Pringle, (afterwards Lord Alemoor,) he was left in a very small minority; the house dividing, two hundred against eleven. The year following, by a steady perseverance in the same views, he had the satisfaction of bringing over a majority to his sentiments, and gave a beginning to that system of ecclesiastical government which it was one of the great objects of his life to carry into effect, by the most vigorous and decisive, though the most temperate and conciliatory measures. A paper which he drew up in the course of these proceedings, and which will be noticed in its proper place, explains the groundwork of the plan which he and his friends afterwards pursued.

The establishment of the *Select Society* in Edinburgh in the year 1754, opened another field for the display and for the cultivation of his talents. This institution, intended partly for philosophical inquiry, and partly for the improvement of the members in public speaking, was projected by Mr. Allan Ramsay the

painter, and a few of his friends, but soon attracted so much of the public notice, that in the following year the number of members exceeded a hundred, including all the individuals in Edinburgh and the neighbourhood who[1] were most distinguished by genius or by literary attainments. In the list of those who united with Mr. Ramsay in the formation of this society, we find the names of Dr. Robertson, Mr. David Hume, Mr. Adam Smith, Mr. Wedderburn, (now Lord Chancellor,) Lord Kames, Mr. John Home, Dr. Carlyle, Mr. Andrew Stuart, Sir Gilbert Elliot, and Lord Alemoor. The Society subsisted in vigour for six or seven years, and produced debates, such as have not often been heard in modern assemblies;—debates, where the dignity of the speakers was not lowered by the intrigues of policy, or the intemperance of faction; and where the most splendid talents that have ever adorned this country were roused to their best exertions, by the liberal and ennobling discussions of literature and philosophy. To this institution, while it lasted, Dr. Robertson contributed his most zealous support; seldom omitting an opportunity of taking a share in its business; and deriving from it an addition to his own fame, which may be easily conceived by those who are acquainted with his subsequent writings, or who have witnessed those powers of argument and illustration which, in the ecclesiastical courts, he afterwards employed so successfully, on subjects not so susceptible of the embellishments of eloquence.

In these courts, indeed, during the very period when the Select Society was contributing so much to the fame and to the improvement of Scotland, there occurred one subject of debate, unconnected with the ordinary details of Church government, which afforded at once full scope to Dr. Robertson's powers as a speaker, and to a display of that mild and conciliatory temper, which was afterwards, for a long course of years, so honourably employed, in healing the divisions of a Church torn with faction, and in smoothing the transition from the severity of puritanical manners, to habits less at variance with the genius of the times. For this important and arduous task he was fitted in an emi-

[1] See Note A.

nent degree by the happy union he exhibited in his own character, of that exemplary decency which became his order, with all the qualities that form the charm and the ornament of social life.—The occurrence to which I allude more particularly at present, was the flame kindled among the Scottish clergy in the year 1757, by the publication of the *Tragedy of Douglas*, the author of which, Mr. John Home, was then minister of Athelstonford. The extraordinary merits of this performance, which is now become to Scotchmen a subject of national pride, were not sufficient to atone for so bold a departure from the austerity expected in a Presbyterian divine; and the offence was not a little exasperated by the conduct of some of Mr. Home's brethren, who, partly from curiosity, and partly from a friendly wish to share in the censure bestowed on the author, were led to witness the first representation of the piece on the Edinburgh stage. In the whole course of the ecclesiastical proceedings connected with these incidents, Dr. Robertson distinguished himself by the ablest and most animated exertions in defence of his friends; and contributed greatly, by his persuasive eloquence, to the mildness of that sentence in which the prosecution at last terminated. His arguments on this occasion had, it may be presumed, the greater weight, that he had never himself entered within the walls of a playhouse; a remarkable proof, among numberless others which the history of his life affords, of that scrupulous circumspection in his private conduct, which, while it added so much to his usefulness as a clergyman, was essential to his influence as the leader of a party; and which so often enabled him to recommend successfully to others, the same candid and indulgent spirit that was congenial to his own mind.

The flattering notice which these exertions drew to him from the public, and the rising influence which he had already secured among his own order, would have presented to a temper less active and persevering than his, many seductions to interrupt his studies. A considerable portion of his time appears, in fact, to have been devoted, during this period of his life, to the society of his friends; but, as far as his situation enabled him to com-

mand it, it was to a society which amply compensated for its encroachment on his studious leisure, by what it added to the culture and enlargement of his mind. The improvement which, in these respects, he derived from the conversation of Patrick Lord Elibank, he often recollected in his more advanced years with peculiar pleasure; and it affords no inconsiderable proof of the penetration of that lively and accomplished nobleman, that long before the voice of the public could have given any direction to his attachments, he had selected as the companions of his social hours, the historian of Queen Mary, and the author of the *Tragedy of Douglas.*

No seductions, however, could divert Dr. Robertson from the earliest object of his ambition, and in the midst of all his avocations, his studies had been advancing with a gradual progress. In the spring of the year which followed the debates about Mr. Home's *Tragedy*, he went to London to concert measures for the publication of his *History of Scotland*,—a work of which the plan is said to have been formed soon after his settlement at Gladsmuir. It was published on the 1st of February 1759, and was received by the world with such unbounded applause, that, before the end of that month, he was desired by his bookseller to prepare for a second edition.

From this moment the complexion of his fortune was changed. After a long struggle in an obscure, though a happy and hospitable retreat, with a narrow income and an increasing family, his prospects brightened at once. He saw independence and affluence within his reach, and flattered himself with the idea of giving a still bolder flight to his genius, when no longer depressed by those tender anxieties which so often fall to the lot of men whose pursuits and habits, while they heighten the endearments of domestic life, withdraw them from the paths of interest and ambition.

In venturing on a step, the success of which was to be so decisive, not only with respect to his fame, but to his future comfort, it is not surprising that he should have felt, in a more than common degree, "that anxiety and diffidence so natural to an author in delivering to the world his first performance."

"The time," he observes in his preface, "which I have employed in attempting to render it worthy of the public approbation, it is perhaps prudent to conceal, till it shall be known whether that approbation is ever to be bestowed."

Among the many congratulatory letters addressed to him on this occasion, a few have been accidentally preserved; and, although the contents of some of them may not now appear very important, they still derive a certain degree of interest from the names and characters of the writers, and from the sympathetic share which a good-natured reader cannot fail to take in Dr. Robertson's feelings, when he perceived the first dawning of his future fame.

In the extracts, however, which I mean at present to produce from these letters, my principal object is to show how very strong an impression was made on the public mind by this work at the time of its first appearance. It was then regarded as an attempt towards a species of composition that had been cultivated with very little success in this island; and accordingly, it entitles the author not merely to the praise which would now be due to an historian of equal eminence, but to a high rank among those original and leading minds which form and guide the taste of a nation. In this view, a just estimate of its peculiar merits is more likely to be collected from the testimony of such as could compare it only with the productions of former writers, than from the opinions of critics familiarized in early life to all that has since been done to imitate or to rival its beauties.

A letter from Mr. Horace Walpole, to whom some specimens of the work had been communicated during the author's visit to London, is the earliest testimony of this kind which I have found among his papers. It is dated January 18, 1759.

"I expect with impatience your book, which you are so kind as to say you have ordered for me, and for which I already give you many thanks; the specimen I saw convinces me that I do not thank you rashly. Good historians are the most scarce of all writers; and no wonder! a good style is not very common; thorough information is still more rare;—and if

these meet, what a chance that impartiality should be added to them! Your style, Sir, I may venture to say, I saw was uncommonly good; I have reason to think your information so; and in the few times I had the pleasure of conversing with you, your good sense and candour made me conclude, that even on a subject which we are foolish enough to make *party*, you preserve your judgment unbiassed. I fear I shall not preserve mine so; the too kind acknowledgments that I frequently receive from gentlemen of your country, of the just praise that I paid to merit, will make me, at least for the future, not very unprejudiced. If the opinion of so trifling a writer as I am was of any consequence, it would then be worth Scotland's while to let the world know, that when my book was written I had no reason to be partial to it: but, Sir, your country will trust to the merit of its natives, not to foreign testimonials, for its reputation."

This letter was followed immediately by another from Dr. Robertson's bookseller, Mr. Millar. It is dated 27th January 1759, a few days before the publication of the book, and conveys very flattering expressions of approbation from Dr. Warburton and Mr. Garrick, to both of whom copies had been privately sent at the author's request,—expressions which, though they cannot now add much to a reputation so solidly established, were gratifying at the time, and do honour to the candour and discernment of the writers.

"I have received," says Dr. Warburton, in a note addressed to Mr. Millar, "and read with great pleasure, the new *History of Scotland*, and will not wait for the judgment of the public to pronounce it a very excellent work. From the author's apparent love of civil and religious liberty, I suppose, that were it not for fear of offence, (which every wise man in his situation would fear to give,) he would have spoken with much more freedom of the hierarchical principles of the infant Church of Scotland."

Mr. Garrick, beside writing to Millar, addressed himself directly to the author. "Upon my word, I was never more entertained in all my life; and though I read it aloud to a

friend and Mrs. Garrick, I finished the three first books at two sittings. I could not help writing to Millar, and congratulating him upon this great acquisition to his literary treasures I assure you that there is no *love lost* (as the saying is) between you and Mrs. Garrick. She is resolved to see Scotland as soon as my affairs will permit: nor do I find her inclination in the least abated, though I read your *Second Book* (in which her religion is so exquisitely handled) with all the malevolent exertion I was master of—but it would not do; she thinks you right even in that, and still resolves to see Scotland. In short, if she can give up the Pope and his trumpery so readily to you, what must her poor husband think? I shall keep in England, I assure you; for you have convinced me how difficult it is to contend with the Scots in their own country."

These agreeable anticipations of the public voice were, in a few weeks, fully confirmed by a letter from Mr. Strahan, late printer to his Majesty, and a partner of Mr. Millar's in the property of the book. It is the oldest letter of Mr. Strahan's that I have observed among Dr. Robertson's papers. Many were afterwards written, in the course of a correspondence which continued twenty years, and which Dr. Robertson always mentioned with much pleasure, and with the strongest testimonies to the worth, the liberality, and the discernment of his friend. The concluding sentences express strongly the opinion which this very competent judge had previously formed of the probable reception of a History of Scotland.

. . . "I most sincerely wish you joy of your success, and have not the least doubt but it will have all the good effects upon your future fortune which you could possibly hope for or expect. Much depended on the first performance: that trial is now happily over, and henceforth you will sail with a favourable gale. In truth, to acquire such a flood of approbation from writing on a subject in itself so unpopular in this country, is neither a common nor a contemptible conquest."[1]

By the kindness of Mr. Strahan's son,[2] I am enabled to quote

[1] See Note B.

[2] Andrew Strahan, Esq., M.P.

the following passage from Dr. Robertson's answer to the foregoing letter:—

"When we took leave, on finishing the printing of my book, I had no expectation that it was so soon to come through your hands a second time. The rapidity of its success has not surprised any man more than the Author of it. I do not affect to think worse of it than is natural for him who made it; and I never was much afraid of the subject, which is interesting to the English as well as Scots; but a much more moderate success was all I looked for. However, since it has so far outgone my hopes, I enjoy it. I have flattered nobody in order to obtain it, and I have not spared to speak truth of all factions and sects."

It would be tedious and useless to transcribe the complimentary passages which occur in various other letters from the author's friends. Lord Royston, the late Sir Gilbert Elliot, Dr. Birch, Dr. Douglas, (now Bishop of Salisbury,) and Dr. John Blair, (late Prebendary of Westminster,) were among the first to perceive and to predict the extent of that reputation he was about to establish. A few passages from the letters addressed to him by Mr. Walpole and Mr. David Hume, as they enter more into detail concerning his merits as a writer, may, I think, be introduced into this Memoir without impropriety.

"Having finished," says Mr. Walpole, "the first volume, and made a little progress in the second, I cannot stay till I have finished the latter to tell you how exceedingly I admire the work. Your modesty will make you perhaps suppose these are words of compliment and of course; but as I can give you very good reasons for my approbation, you may believe that I no more flatter your performance, than I have read it superficially, hastily, or carelessly."

"The style is most pure, proper, and equal; is very natural and easy, except now and then where, as I may justly call it, you are forced to *translate* from bad writers. You will agree with me, Sir, that an historian who writes from other authorities cannot possibly always have as flowing a style as an author whose narrative is dictated from his own knowledge. Your

perspicuity is most beautiful, your relation always interesting, never languid; and you have very extraordinarily united two merits very difficult to be reconciled,—I mean, that, though you have formed your history into pieces of information, each of which would make a separate memoir, yet the whole is hurried on into one uninterrupted story. I assure you I value myself on the first distinction, especially as Mr. Charles Townshend made the same remark. You have preserved the gravity of history without any formality, and you have at the same time avoided what I am now running into, antithesis and conceit. In short, Sir, I don't know where or what history is written with more excellences:—and when I say this, you may be sure I do not forget your impartiality. But, Sir, I will not wound your bashfulness with more encomiums; yet the public will force you to hear them. I never knew justice so rapidly paid to a work of so deep and serious a kind; for deep it is, and it must be great sense that could penetrate so far into human nature, considering how little you have been conversant with the world.".

The long and uninterrupted friendship which subsisted between Dr. Robertson and Mr. Hume is well known; and it is certainly a circumstance highly honourable to both, when we consider the wide diversity of their sentiments on the most important subjects, and the tendency which the coincidence of their historical labours would naturally have had to excite rivalship and jealousy in less liberal minds. The passages I am now to quote from Mr. Hume's letters, place in a most amiable light the characters both of the writer and of his correspondent.

"You have very good cause to be satisfied with the success of your *History*, as far as it can be judged of from a few weeks' publication. I have not heard of one who does not praise it warmly; and were I to enumerate all those whose suffrages I have either heard in its favour, or been told of, I should fill my letter with a list of names. Mallet told me that he was sure there was no Englishman capable of composing such a work. The town will have it that you was educated at Oxford, think-

ing it impossible for a mere untravelled Scotchman to produce such language. In short, you may depend on the success of your work, and that your name is known very much to your advantage.

"I am diverting myself with the notion how much you will profit by the applause of my enemies in Scotland. Had you and I been such fools as to have given way to jealousy, to have entertained animosity and malignity against each other, and to have rent all our acquaintance into parties, what a noble amusement we should have exhibited to the blockheads, which now they are likely to be disappointed of. All the people whose friendship or judgment either of us value, are friends to both, and will be pleased with the success of both, as we will be with that of each other. I declare to you I have not of a long time had a more sensible pleasure than the good reception of your *History* has given me within this fortnight."

I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of transcribing a few paragraphs from another letter of Mr. Hume's, dated the 20th of the same month. "I am afraid that my letters will be tedious and disagreeable to you by their uniformity. Nothing but continued and unvaried accounts of the same thing must in the end prove disgusting. Yet since you will hear me speak on this subject, I cannot help it, and must fatigue your ears as much as ours are in this place by endless, and repeated, and noisy praises of the *History of Scotland.* Dr. Douglas told me yesterday that he had seen the Bishop of Norwich, who had just bought the book from the high commendations he heard of it from Mr. Legge. Mallet told me that Lord Mansfield is at a loss whether he shall most esteem the matter or the style. Elliot told me, that being in company with George Grenville, that gentleman was speaking loud in the same key. Our friend pretended ignorance; said he knew the author, and if he thought the book good for anything, would send for it and read it. Send for it by all means, (said Mr. Grenville,) you have not read a better book of a long time. But, said Elliot, I suppose, although the matter may be tolerable, as the author was never on this side of the Tweed till he

wrote it, it must be very barbarous in the expression. By no means, cried Mr. Grenville; had the author lived all his life in London, and in the best company, he could not have expressed himself with greater elegance and purity. Lord Lyttleton seems to think that since the time of St. Paul there scarce has been a better writer than Dr. Robertson. Mr. Walpole triumphs in the success of his favourites the Scotch, &c. &c. &c. . . . .

"The great success of your book, beside its real merit, is forwarded by its prudence, and by the deference paid to established opinions. It gains also by its being your first performance, and by its surprising the public, who are not upon their guard against it. By reason of these two circumstances justice is more readily done to its merit, which, however, is really so great, that I believe there is scarce another instance of a first performance being so near perfection."[1]

Of this work, so flattering to the author by its first success, no fewer than fourteen editions were published before his death, and he had the satisfaction to see its popularity increase to the last, notwithstanding the repeated assaults it had to encounter from various writers, distinguished by their controversial acuteness, and seconded by all the prepossessions which are likely to influence the opinions of the majority of readers. The character of Mary has been delineated anew, and the tale of her misfortunes has again been told, with no common powers of expression and pathos, by an historian more indulgent to her errors, and more undistinguishing in his praise: but, after all, it is in the *History* of Dr. Robertson that every one still reads the transactions of her reign; and such is the skilful contrast of light and shade, aided by the irresistible charm of his narration, that the story of the beautiful and unfortunate Queen, as related by him, excites on the whole a deeper interest in her fortunes, and a more lively sympathy with her fate, than have been produced by all the attempts to canonize her memory, whether inspired by the sympathetic zeal of the Romish Church, or by the enthusiasm of Scottish chivalry.

[1] See Note C.

In perusing the letters addressed to Dr. Robertson on the publication of this book, it is somewhat remarkable that I have not found one in which he is charged with the slightest unfairness towards the Queen; and that, on the contrary, almost all his correspondents accuse him of an undue prepossession in her favour. "I am afraid," says Mr. Hume, "that you, as well as myself, have drawn Mary's character with too great softenings. She was undoubtedly a violent woman at all times. You will see in *Munden* proofs of the utmost rancour against her innocent, good-natured, dutiful son. She certainly disinherited him. What think you of a conspiracy for kidnapping him, and delivering him a prisoner to the King of Spain, never to recover his liberty till he should turn Catholic?—Tell Goodall, that if he can but give me up Queen Mary, I hope to satisfy him in everything else; and he will have the pleasure of seeing John Knox and the Reformers made very ridiculous."

"It is plain," says Mr. Walpole, "that you wish to excuse Mary; and yet it is so plain that you never violate truth in her favour, that I own I think still worse of her than I did, since I read your *History*."

Dr. Birch expresses himself much to the same purpose. "If the second volume of the *State Papers of Lord Burleigh*, published since Christmas here, had appeared before your *History* had been finished, it would have furnished you with reasons for entertaining a less favourable opinion of Mary Queen of Scots in one or two points, than you seem at present possessed of."

Dr. John Blair too, in a letter dated from London, observes to Dr. Robertson, that "the only general objection to his work was founded on his tenderness for Queen Mary." "Lord Chesterfield," says he, "though he approves much of your *History*, told me, that he finds this to be a bias which no Scotchman can get the better of."

I would not be understood, by quoting these passages, to give any opinion upon the subject to which they refer. It is a subject which I have never examined with attention, and which, I must confess, never excited my curiosity. Whatever

judgment we form concerning the points in dispute, it leads to no general conclusion concerning human affairs, nor throws any new light on human character. Like any other historical question, in which the evidence has been industriously darkened by the arts of contending parties, the proofs of Mary's innocence or guilt may furnish an amusing and harmless employment to the leisure of the antiquary; but, at this distance of time, it is difficult to conceive how prejudice or passion should enter into the discussion, or should magnify it into an object of important and serious research. With respect to Dr. Robertson's narrative, in particular, it is sufficiently manifest, that whatever inaccuracies may be detected in it by the labours of succeeding inquirers, they can never furnish to the partisans of Mary, any ground for impeaching his candour and good faith as a writer. All his prepossessions (if he had any on this subject) must have been in favour of the Queen; for it is chiefly from the powerful interest excited by her story, that he could hope for popularity with the multitude; and it was only by the romantic pictures which her name presents to the fancy, that he could accommodate to the refinement of modern taste, the annals of a period where perfidy, cruelty, and bigotry, appear in all their horrors; unembellished by those attractions which, in other states of society, they have so often assumed, and which, how much soever they may afflict the moralist, yet facilitate and adorn the labours of the historian.

Among the various circumstances that distinguish Dr. Robertson's genius and taste in the execution of this work, the address with which he interweaves the personal history of the Queen with the general events he records, is not the least remarkable. Indeed, without the aid of so interesting a character, the affairs of Scotland, during the period he treats of, could not have derived, even from his hand, a sufficient importance and dignity to engage the curiosity of the present age.

Another difficulty arising also from his subject, he appears to me to have surmounted with exquisite skill. In relating the transactions of a foreign country, however remote the period, and however antiquated the manners, it is easy for an historian

to avoid in his narrative, whatever might lessen the dignity of the actors, or lower the tone of his composition. The employment of expressions debased by common and trivial use, is superseded by the necessity he is under to translate from one language into another; and the most insignificant of his details derive a charm from the novelty of the scenery. The writer too, who in this island employs his genius on the ancient history of England, addresses himself to readers already enamoured of the subject, and who listen with fond prepossessions to the recital of facts consecrated in their imaginations by the tale of the nursery. Even a description of old English manners, expressed in the obsolete dialect of former centuries, pleases by its simplicity and truth; and while it presents to us those retrospects of the past on which the mind loves to dwell, has no tendency to awaken any mean or ludicrous images. But the influence of Scottish associations, so far as it is favourable to antiquity, is confined to Scotchmen alone, and furnishes no resources to the writer who aspires to a place among the English classics. Nay, such is the effect of that provincial situation to which Scotland is now reduced, that the transactions of former ages are apt to convey to ourselves exaggerated conceptions of barbarism, from the uncouth and degraded dialect in which they are recorded. To adapt the history of such a country to the present standard of British taste, it was necessary for the author, not only to excite an interest for names which, to the majority of his readers, were formerly indifferent or unknown, but, what was still more difficult, to unite in his portraits the truth of nature with the softenings of art, and to reject whatever was unmeaning or offensive in the drapery, without effacing the characteristic garb of the times. In this task of "conquering," as Livy expresses it, "the rudeness of antiquity by the art of writing," they alone are able to judge how far Dr. Robertson has succeeded, who have compared his work with the materials out of which it was formed.

Nor are these sacrifices to modern taste inconsistent with the fidelity of a history which records the transactions of former ages. On the contrary, they aid the judgment of the reader in

forming a philosophical estimate of the condition and character of our ancestors, by counteracting that strong bias of the mind which confounds human nature and human life with the adventitious and ever-changing attire which they borrow from fashion. When we read the compositions of Buchanan in his native tongue;—abounding in idioms which are now appropriated to the most illiterate classes of the people, and accompanied with an orthography which suggests the coarsest forms of Scottish pronunciation;—how difficult do we find it to persuade ourselves, that we are conversing with a writer whose Latin productions vie with the best models of antiquity! No fact can illustrate more strongly the necessity of correcting our common impressions concerning the ancient state of Scotland, by translating, not only the antiquated phraseology of our forefathers into a more modern idiom, but by translating (if I may use the expression) their antiquated fashions into the corresponding fashions of our own times.

The peculiar circumstances of Scotland since the union of the crowns, are extremely apt to warp our ideas with respect to its previous history. The happy but slow effects produced by the union of the kingdoms, do not extend beyond the memory of some of our contemporaries; and the traditions we have received concerning the condition of our immediate predecessors, are apt to impress us with a belief, that at a still earlier period the gloom was proportionally more deep and universal. It requires an effort of reflection to conceive the effects which must have resulted from the residence of a court; and it is not perhaps easy for us to avoid underrating the importance of that court while it existed. During the long and intimate intercourse with England, which preceded the disputed succession between Bruce and Baliol, it was certainly not without its share of that "barbaric pomp" which was then affected by the English sovereigns; nor, under our later kings, connected as it was with the court of France, could it be altogether untinctured with those envied manners and habits, of which that country has been always regarded as the parent soil, and which do not seem to be the native growth of either part of our island.

These circumstances, accordingly, (aided, perhaps, in no inconsiderable degree by the field of ambition presented by an opulent hierarchy,) appear to have operated powerfully on the national spirit and genius. The studies which were then valued in other parts of Europe, were cultivated by many of our countrymen with distinguished success: Nor was their own vernacular tongue neglected by those whose rank or situation destined them for public affairs. At the era, more particularly, when Dr. Robertson's *History* closes, it was so rapidly assuming a more regular form, that, excepting by a different system of orthography, and a few inconsiderable peculiarities of dialect, the epistolary style of some of our Scottish statesmen is hardly distinguishable from that of Queen Elizabeth's ministers.

This era was followed by a long and melancholy period, not less fatal to genius than to morals; and which had scarcely arrived at its complete termination when Dr. Robertson appeared as an author; aspiring at once to adorn the monuments of former times, when Scotland was yet a kingdom, and to animate his countrymen by his example, in reviving its literary honours.

Before quitting this first work of Dr. Robertson, I must not omit to mention (what forms the strongest testimony of its excellence) the severe trial it had to undergo in the public judgment, by appearing nearly at the same time with that volume of Mr. Hume's *History* which involves an account of Scottish affairs during the reigns of Queen Mary and King James. It is not my intention to attempt a parallel of these two eminent writers: nor, indeed, would the sincerity of their mutual attachment, and the lively recollection of it which still remains with many of their common friends, justify me in stating their respective merits in the way of opposition. Their peculiar excellences, besides, were of a kind so different, that they might be justly said (in the language which a Roman critic* employs in speaking of Livy and Sallust) to be "*pares magis quam similes.*" They divide between them the honour of having supplied an important blank in English literature, by enabling

* [Quintilian, *Instit.*, Lib. XI. cap. i.]

their countrymen to dispute the palm of historical writing with the other nations of Europe. Many have since followed their example, in attempting to bestow interest and ornament on different portions of British story; but the public voice sufficiently acquits me of any partiality when I say, that hitherto they have only been followed at a distance. In this respect, I may with confidence apply to them the panegyric which Quintilian pronounces on the two great historians of Ancient Greece;—and, perhaps, if I were inclined to characterize the beauties most prominent in each, I might, without much impropriety, avail myself of the contrast with which that panegyric concludes.

"Historiam multi scripsere, sed nemo dubitat, duos longe cæteris præferendos, quorum diversa virtus laudem pene est parem consecuta. Densus et brevis et semper instans sibi Thucydides. Dulcis et candidus et fusus Herodotus. Ille concitatis, hic remissis affectibus melior. Ille vi, hic voluptate."*

* [*Instit.* Lib. X. cap. i.]

SECTION II.

PROGRESS OF DR. ROBERTSON'S LITERARY PLANS AND UNDERTAKINGS.—HISTORY OF THE REIGN OF THE EMPEROR CHARLES V.

During the time that the *History of Scotland* was in the press, Dr. Robertson removed with his family from Gladsmuir to Edinburgh, in consequence of a presentation which he had received to one of the churches of that city. His preferments now multiplied rapidly. In 1759, he was appointed chaplain of Stirling Castle; in 1761, one of his Majesty's chaplains in ordinary for Scotland; and in 1762, he was chosen Principal of this University. Two years afterwards, the office of King's Historiographer for Scotland (with a salary of two hundred pounds a year) was revived in his favour.

The revenue arising from these different appointments, though far exceeding what had ever been enjoyed before by any Presbyterian Clergyman in Scotland, did not satisfy the zeal of some of Dr. Robertson's admirers, who, mortified at the narrow field which this part of the island afforded to his ambition, wished to open to it the career of the English Church. References to such a project occur in letters addressed to him about this time by Sir Gilbert Elliot, Mr. Hume, and Dr. John Blair. What answer he returned to them, I have not been able to learn; but, as the subject is mentioned once only by each of these gentlemen, it is presumable that his disapprobation was expressed in those decided terms which became the consistency and dignity of his character.

Dr. Robertson's own ambition was, in the meantime, directed to a different object. Soon after the publication of his Scottish

History, we find him consulting his friends about the choice of another historical subject,—anxious to add new laurels to those he had already acquired. Dr. John Blair urged him strongly on this occasion to write a complete History of England, and mentioned to him, as an inducement, a conversation between Lord Chesterfield and Colonel Irwin, in which the former said, that he would not scruple, if Dr. Robertson would undertake such a work, to move, in the House of Peers, that he should have public encouragement to enable him to carry it into execution. But this proposal he was prevented from listening to, by his unwillingness to interfere with Mr. Hume, although it coincided with a favourite plan which he himself had formed at a very early period of his life. The two subjects which appear to have chiefly divided his choice were, the History of Greece, and that of the Emperor Charles the Fifth. Between these he hesitated long, balancing their comparative advantages and disadvantages, and availing himself of all the lights that his correspondents could impart to him. Mr. Walpole and Mr. Hume took a more peculiar interest in his deliberations, and discussed the subject with him at length in various letters. I shall extract a few passages from these. The opinions of such writers upon such a question cannot fail to be generally interesting; and some of the hints they suggest may perhaps be useful to those who, conscious of their own powers, are disposed to regret that the field of historical composition is exhausted.

The following passages are copied from a letter of Mr. Walpole, dated 4th March 1759:—

"If I can throw in any additional temptation to your disposition for writing, it is worth my while, even at the hazard of my judgment and my knowledge, both of which, however, are small enough to make me tender of them. Before I read your history, I should probably have been glad to dictate to you, and (I will venture to say it, it satirizes nobody but myself) should have thought I did honour to an obscure Scotch clergyman, by directing his studies with my superior lights and abilities. How you have saved me, Sir, from making a ridiculous figure, by making so great an one yourself! But could I suspect, that

a man I believe much younger, and whose dialect I scarce understood, and who came to me with all the diffidence and modesty of a very middling author, and who, I was told, had passed his life in a small living near Edinburgh; could I suspect that he had not only written what all the world now allows the best modern history, but that he had written it in the purest English, and with as much seeming knowledge of men and courts as if he had passed all his life in important embassies? In short, Sir, I have not power to make you what you ought to be, a minister of state; but I will do all I can,—I will stimulate you to continue writing, and I shall do it without presumption.

"I should like either of the subjects you mention, and I can figure one or two others that would shine in your hands. In one light the History of Greece seems preferable. You know all the materials for it that can possibly be had. It is concluded, it is clear of all objections; for perhaps nobody but I should run wildly into passionate fondness for liberty, if I was writing about Greece. It even might, I think, be made agreeably new, and *that* by comparing the extreme difference of their manners and ours, particularly in the article of finances, a system almost new in the world. . . .

"With regard to the History of Charles V., it is a magnificent subject, and worthy of you. It is more—it is fit for you; for you have shewn that you can write on ticklish subjects with the utmost discretion, and on subjects of religious party with temper and impartiality. Besides, by what little I have skimmed of history myself, I have seen how many mistakes, how many prejudices, may easily be detected; and though much has been written on that age, probably truth still remains to be written of it. Yet I have an objection to this subject. Though Charles V. was, in a manner, the Emperor of Europe, yet he was a German or a Spaniard. Consider, Sir, by what you must have found in writing the History of Scotland, how difficult it would be for the most penetrating genius of another country to give an adequate idea of Scottish story. So much of all transactions must take their rise from, and depend on,

national laws, customs, and ideas, that I am persuaded a native would always discover great mistakes in a foreign writer. Greece, indeed, is a foreign country, but no Greek is alive to disprove one.

"There are two other subjects which I have sometimes had a mind to treat myself; though my naming one of them will tell you why I did not. It was *the History of Learning.* Perhaps, indeed, it is a work which could not be executed unless intended by a young man from his first looking on a book with reflection. The other is, the History of what I may in one light call the most remarkable period of the world, by containing a succession of five good princes: I need not say, they were Nerva, Trajan, Adrian, and the two Antonines. Not to mention, that no part almost of the Roman History has been well written from the death of Domitian, this period would be the fairest pattern for use, if history can ever effect what she so much pretends to, doing good. I should be tempted to call it the *History of Humanity;* for though Trajan and Adrian had private vices that disgraced them as men, as princes they approached to perfection. Marcus Aurelius arrived still nearer, perhaps with a little ostentation: yet vanity is an amiable machine, if it operates to benevolence. Antoninus Pius seems to have been as good as human nature royalized can be. Adrian's persecution of the Christians would be objected, but then it is much controverted. I am no admirer of elective monarchies; and yet it is remarkable, that when Aurelius's diadem descended to his natural heir, not to the heir of his virtues, the line of beneficence was extinguished; for I am sorry to say, that *hereditary* and *bad* are almost synonymous.—But I am sensible, Sir, that I am a bad adviser for you; the chastity, the purity, the good sense and regularity of your manner, that unity you mention, and of which you are the greatest master, should not be led astray by the licentious frankness, and, I hope, honest indignation of my way of thinking. I may be a fitter companion than a guide; and it is with most sincere zeal, that I offer myself to contribute any assistance in my power towards polishing your future work,

whatever it shall be. You want little help,—I can give little; and indeed I, who am taxed with incorrectness, should not assume airs of a corrector. My *Catalogue* I intended should have been exact enough in style; it has not been thought so by some: I tell you, that you may not trust me too much. Mr. Gray, a very perfect judge, has sometimes censured me for parliamentary phrases, familiar to me, as your Scotch law is to you. I might plead for my inaccuracies, that the greatest part of my book was written with people talking in the room; but that is no excuse to myself, who intended it for correct. However, it is easier to remark inaccuracies in the work of another than in one's own; and, since you command me, I will go again over your second volume, with an eye to the slips, a light in which I certainly did not intend my second examination of it."

In transcribing some of these paragraphs, as well as in the other extracts I have borrowed from Mr. Walpole's letters, I must acknowledge that I have been less influenced by my own private judgment, than by my deference for the partiality which the public has long entertained for this popular and fashionable writer. Of the literary talents of an author on whom so much flattery has been lavished, it does not become me to speak disrespectfully; nor would I be understood to detract from his merits in his own peculiar and very limited walk of historical disquisition: but I should be wanting to myself if I were not to avow, that in the foregoing quotation, my object was rather to gratify the curiosity of others, than to record a testimony which I consider as of any importance to Dr. Robertson's fame. The value of praise, besides, whatever be the abilities of him who bestows it, depends on the opinion we entertain of his candour and sincerity,—qualities which it will be difficult to allow to Mr. Walpole, after comparing the various passages quoted in this *Memoir*, with the sentiments he expresses on the same subject in his posthumous publication.

For the length of the following extract from a letter of Mr. Hume's, no such apology is necessary. The matter is valuable in itself;—and the objections stated to the age of Charles V. as

a subject for history, form the highest possible panegyric on the abilities of the writer, by whom the difficulties which appeared so formidable to Mr. Hume, were so successfully surmounted.

"I have frequently thought, and talked with our common friends upon the subject of your letter. There always occurred to us several difficulties with regard to every subject we could propose. The Ancient Greek History has several recommendations, particularly the good authors from which it must be drawn; but this same circumstance becomes an objection when more narrowly considered: for what can you do in most places with these authors but transcribe and translate them? No letters or State papers from which you could correct their errors, or authenticate their narration, or supply their defects. Besides *Rollin* is so well wrote with respect to style, that with superficial people it passes for sufficient. There is one Dr. Leland, who has lately wrote the *Life of Philip of Macedon*, which is one of the best periods. The book, they tell me, is perfectly well wrote; yet it has had such small sale, and has so little excited the attention of the public, that the author has reason to think his labour thrown away. I have not read the book; but by the size, I should judge it to be too particular. It is a pretty large quarto. I think a book of that size sufficient for the whole History of Greece till the death of Philip; and I doubt not but such a work would be successful, notwithstanding all these discouraging circumstances. The subject is noble, and *Rollin* is by no means equal to it.

"I own I like still less your project of the age of Charles the Fifth. That subject is disjointed, and your hero, who is the sole connexion, is not very interesting. A competent knowledge at least is required of the state and constitution of the Empire, of the several kingdoms of Spain, of Italy, of the Low Countries, which it would be the work of half a life to acquire, and, though some parts of the story may be entertaining, there would be many dry and barren; and the whole seems not to have any great charms.

"But I would not willingly start objections to these schemes,

unless I had something to propose which would be plausible; and I shall mention to you an idea which has sometimes pleased me, and which I had once entertained thoughts of attempting. You may observe that, among modern readers, Plutarch is in every translation the chief favourite of the Ancients. Numberless translations and numberless editions have been made of him in all languages, and no translation has been so ill done as not to be successful. Though those who read the originals never put him in comparison either with Thucydides or Xenophon, he always attaches more the reader in the translation; a proof that the idea and execution of his work is, in the main, happy. Now I would have you think of writing modern lives, somewhat after that manner; not to enter into a detail of the actions, but to mark the manners of the great personages by domestic stories, by remarkable sayings, and by a general sketch of their lives and adventures. You see that in Plutarch the life of Cæsar may be read in half an hour. Were you to write the life of Henry the Fourth of France after that model, you might pillage all the pretty stories in Sully, and speak more of his mistresses than of his battles. In short, you might gather the flower of all modern history in this manner,—the remarkable popes, the kings of Sweden, the great discoverers and conquerors of the New World; even the eminent men of letters might furnish you with matter, and the quick despatch of every different work would encourage you to begin a new one. If one volume were successful, you might compose another at your leisure, and the field is inexhaustible. There are persons whom you might meet with in the corners of history, so to speak, who would be a subject of entertainment quite unexpected; and as long as you live, you might give and receive amusement by such a work. Even your son, if he had a talent for history, would succeed to the subject, and his son to him. I shall insist no farther on this idea, because, if it strikes your fancy, you may easily perceive all its advantages, and, by further thought, all its difficulties."

After much deliberation, Dr. Robertson resolved to undertake

the History of Charles V., a determination not less fortunate for the public than for his own fame, as it engaged him, unexpectedly perhaps, in a train of researches not confined to the period, or to the quarter of the globe that he had originally in view, but which, opening as he advanced new and more magnificent prospects, attracted his curiosity to two of the greatest and most interesting subjects of speculation in the history of human affairs,—the enterprises of modern ambition in the Western World, and the traces of ancient wisdom and arts existing in the East.

The progress of the work, however, was interrupted for some time, about a year after its commencement, by certain circumstances, which induced him to listen more favourably than formerly to the entreaties of those friends who urged him to attempt a History of England. The motives that weighed with him on this occasion are fully explained in a correspondence still extant, in which there are various particulars tending to illustrate his character and his literary views.

From a letter of the late Lord Cathcart to Dr. Robertson, (dated 20th July 1761,) the revival of this project would appear to have originated in a manner not a little flattering to the vanity of an author.

. . . . "Lord Bute told me the King's thoughts, as well as his own, with respect to your *History of Scotland,* and a wish his Majesty had expressed to see a History of England by your pen. His lordship assured me, every source of information which Government can command would be opened to you, and that great, laborious, and extensive as the work must be, he would take care your encouragement should be proportioned to it. He seemed to be aware of some objections you once had, founded on the apprehension of clashing or interfering with Mr. David Hume, who is your friend; but as your performance and his will be upon plans so different from each other, and as *his* will, in point of time, have so much the start of yours, these objections did not seem to him such as upon reflection were likely to continue to have much weight with you. . . .

. . . . "I must add, that though I did not think it right

to inquire particularly into Lord Bute's intentions before I knew a little of your mind, it appeared to me plain that they were higher than any views which can open to you in Scotland, and which, I believe, he would think inconsistent with the attention the other subject would necessarily require." . . .

A paper which has been accidentally preserved among the letters addressed to Dr. Robertson by his friends, enables me to state his sentiments, with respect to the foregoing proposal, in his own words. It is in Dr. Robertson's handwriting, and is marked on the back as "an imperfect sketch of his answer to Lord Cathcart's letter of July 20th." The following extracts contain all those parts of it which are connected with the project of the English History:—

. . . . "After the first publication of the *History of Scotland*, and the favourable reception it met with, I had both very tempting offers from booksellers, and very confident assurances of public encouragement, if I would undertake the History of England. But as Mr. Hume, with whom, notwithstanding the contrariety of our sentiments both in religion and politics, I live in great friendship, was at that time in the middle of the subject, no consideration of interest or reputation would induce me to break in upon a field of which he had taken prior possession; and I determined that my interference with him should never be any obstruction to the sale or success of his work. Nor do I yet repent my having resisted many solicitations to alter this resolution. But the case I now think is entirely changed. His *History* will have been published several years before any work of mine on the same subject can appear; its first run will not be marred by any justling with me, and it will have taken that station in the literary system which belongs to it. This objection, therefore, which I thought and still think so weighty at that time, makes no impression on me at present, and I can now justify my undertaking the English History to myself, to the world, and to him. Besides, our manner of viewing the same subject is so different or peculiar, that (as was the case in our last books) both may maintain

their own rank, have their own partisans, and possess their own merit, without hurting each other.

"I am sensible how extensive and laborious the undertaking is, and that I could not propose to execute it in the manner I could wish, and the public will expect, unless I shall be enabled to consecrate my whole time and industry to it. Though I am not weary of my profession, nor wish ever to throw off my ecclesiastical character, yet I have often wished to be free of the labour of daily preaching, and to have it in my power to apply myself wholly to my studies. This the encouragement your Lordship mentions will put in my power. But as my chief residence must still be in Scotland, where I would choose, both for my own sake and that of my family, to live and to compose; as a visit of three or four months now and then to England will be fully sufficient for consulting such manuscripts as have never been published, I should not wish to drop all connexion with the Church of which I am a member, but still to hold some station in it, without being reduced entirely to the profession of an author.

"Another circumstance must be mentioned to your Lordship. As I have begun the History of Charles V., and have above one-third of it finished, I would not choose to lose what I have done. It will take at least two years to bring that work to perfection; and after that I shall begin the other, which was my first choice long before Mr. Hume undertook it, though I was then too diffident of myself, and too idle to make any progress in the execution of it, farther than forming some general ideas as to the manner in which it should be prosecuted.

"As to the establishment to be made in my favour, it would ill become me to say anything. Whether the present time be a proper one for settling the matter finally, I know not. I beg leave only to say, that however much I may wish to have a point fixed so much for my honour, and which will give such stability to all my future schemes, I am not impatient to enter into possession, before I can set to work with that particular task for which my appointments are to be given."

In a letter addressed to Mr. Baron Mure, (dated Nov. 25,

1761,) Dr. Robertson has explained himself still more fully on some points touched on in the foregoing correspondence.

"I need say no more of my reasons for not undertaking the History of England, immediately after the publication of my last book, or the circumstances which induce me to think that I may now engage in it with propriety. These I have already explained, and I hope they are approved of. The only thing about which I have any difficulty is, the proposal of my residing in London with my family during the time I shall be employed in my intended work. If such a prospect had opened to me a dozen of years ago, I should have reckoned it a very fortunate accident, and would have embraced it without hesitation. But, at my time of life, accustomed to the manners of my own country, and living with ease and credit and in good company here, I am unwilling to think of entering upon new habits, of forming new connexions and friendships, and of mingling with a society which, by what I have seen of it, I do not relish so much as that to which I am more familiar. This is the light in which, if I were still a single man, I must have viewed the matter. But in my present situation, with a wife and four children, my difficulties increase; and I must consider not only what would be agreeable to myself, but what may be of advantage to them. You know how greatly the expense of housekeeping at London exceeds that at Edinburgh, and how much the charge of educating children increases. You know with what ease women of a middling fortune mingle with good company in Edinburgh; how impossible that is in London; and even how great the expense is of their having any proper society at all. As I happen to have three daughters, these circumstances must occur to me, and have their own weight. Besides this, if it shall please God to spare my life a few years, I shall be able to leave my family, if it continue in Scotland, in a situation more independent than I could ever expect from any success or encouragement, if they shall settle in England.

. . . . "Were I to carve out my own fortune, I should wish to continue one of his Majesty's Chaplains for Scotland, but to resign my charge as a minister of Edinburgh, which engrosses

more of my time than one who is a stranger to the many minute duties of that office can well imagine. I would wish to apply my whole time to literary pursuits, which is at present parcelled out among innumerable occupations. In order to enable me to make this resignation, some appointment must be assigned me for life. What that should be, it neither becomes me, nor do I pretend to say. One thing, however, I wish with some earnestness, that the thing might be executed soon, both as it will give me great vigour in my studies to have my future fortune ascertained in such an honourable manner, and because, by allowing me to apply myself wholly to my present work, it will enable me to finish it in less time, and to begin so much the sooner to my new task."

In what manner this plan, after being so far advanced, came to be finally abandoned, I have not been able to discover. The letters from which the foregoing extracts are taken, seem to have been preserved by mere accident; and after the date of the last, I find a blank till 1763 in Dr. Robertson's correspondence with Lord Cathcart. Some letters which passed between them about that time, are now in my possession. They relate chiefly to a scheme which was then in agitation, and which was soon after accomplished, of reviving in Dr. Robertson's favour the office of Historiographer for Scotland; but from various incidental passages in them, it appears clearly that he still looked forwards to a History of England as the next subject he was to undertake after that of Charles V. It is not impossible that the resignation of Lord Bute in 1764 may have contributed somewhat to alter his views, by imposing on him the necessity of a new negotiation through a different channel. The History of Charles V., besides, employed him much longer than he foresaw, partly in consequence of his avocations as Principal of the University, and partly of those arising from his connexion with the Church, in which, at that period, faction ran high. In the execution, too, of this work, he found that the transactions relating to America, which he had originally intended as the subject of an episode, were of such magnitude as to require a separate narrative; and when at last he had

brought to a termination the long and various labours in which he was thus involved, his health was too much impaired, and his life too far advanced, to allow him to think of an undertaking so vast in itself, and which Mr. Hume had already executed with so splendid and so merited a reputation.

The delays which retarded the publication of the *History of Charles V.*, together with the author's established popularity as a writer, had raised the curiosity of the public to a high pitch before that work appeared; and perhaps there never was a book, unconnected with the circumstances of the times, that was expected with more general impatience. It is unnecessary for me to say that these expectations were not disappointed, nor would it be worth while to swell this Memoir with a repetition of the *eulogiums* lavished on the author in the literary journals of the day. The sentiments of his own personal friends, as expressed in the openness and confidence of a private epistolary correspondence, cannot fail to be more interesting; and I shall accordingly on this, as on other occasions, avail myself of whatever passages in his papers appear to me to be useful, either for illustrating his literary progress or his habits and connexions in private life.

The paragraphs which immediately follow are part of a letter from Mr. Hume, without any date, but written, as appears from the contents, while the *History of Charles V.* was still in the press. The levity of the style forms such a striking contrast to the character which this grave and philosophical historian sustains in his publications, that I have sometimes hesitated about the propriety of subjecting to the criticisms of the world so careless an effusion of gaiety and affection. I trust, however, that to some it will not be wholly uninteresting to enjoy a glimpse of the writer and his correspondent in the habits of private intercourse, and that to them the playful and good-natured irony of Mr. Hume will suggest not unpleasing pictures of the hours which they borrowed from business and study. Dr. Robertson used frequently to say, that in Mr. Hume's gaiety there was something which approached to *infantine*, and that he had found the same thing so

often exemplified in the circle of his other friends, that he was almost disposed to consider it as characteristical of genius. It has certainly lent an amiable grace to some of the most favourite names in ancient story.

. . . . "Atqui
Primores populi arripuit Populumque tributim.
* * * * * *
Quin ubi se a vulgo et scenâ in secreta remorant
Virtus Scipiadæ et mitis sapientia Læli,
Nugari cum illo et discincti ludere, donec
Decoqueretur olus, soliti." * . . . .

"I got yesterday from Strahan about thirty sheets of your *History*, to be sent over to Suard, and last night and this morning have run them over with great avidity. I could not deny myself the satisfaction (which I hope also will not displease you) of expressing presently my extreme approbation of them. To say only they are very well written, is by far too faint an expression, and much inferior to the sentiments I feel; they are composed with nobleness, with dignity, with elegance, and with judgment, to which there are few equals. They even excel, and, I think, in a sensible degree, your *History of Scotland*. I propose to myself great pleasure in being the only man in England, during some months, who will be in a situation of doing you justice, after which you may certainly expect that my voice will be drowned in that of the public.

"You know that you and I have always been on the footing of finding in each other's productions *something to blame and something to commend;* and, therefore, you may perhaps expect also some seasoning of the former kind; but really neither my leisure nor inclination allowed me to make such remarks, and I sincerely believe you have afforded me very small materials for them. However, such particulars as occur to my memory I shall mention. *Maltreat* is a Scotticism which occurs once. What the devil had you to do with that old-fashioned dangling word *wherewith?* I should as soon take back *whereupon*, *whereunto*, and *wherewithal*. I think the only tolerable decent gentleman of the family is *wherein*, and I should not choose to

* [Horace, *Sermones*, Lib. II. sat. i., 68.]

be often seen in his company. But I know your affection for *wherewith* proceeds from your partiality to Dean Swift, whom I can often laugh with, whose style I can even approve, but surely can never admire. It has no harmony, no eloquence, no ornament, and not much correctness, whatever the English may imagine. Were not their literature still in a somewhat barbarous state, that author's place would not be so high among their classics. But what a fancy is this you have taken of saying always *an hand, an heart, an head?* Have you *an ear?* Do you not know that this (*n*) is added before vowels to prevent the cacophony, and ought never to take place before (*h*) when that letter is sounded? It is never pronounced in these words, why should it be wrote? Thus, I should say, a *history*, and an *historian;* and so would you too, if you had any sense. But you tell me that Swift does otherwise. To be sure there is no reply to that; and we must swallow your *hath* too upon the same authority. I will see you d——d sooner.—But I will endeavour to keep my temper.

"I do not like this sentence in page 149. *This step was taken in consequence of the Treaty Wolsey had concluded with the Emperor at Brussels, and which had hitherto been kept secret.* Si sic omnia dixisses, I should never have been plagued with hearing your praises so often sounded, and that fools preferred your style to mine. Certainly it had been better to have said, *which Wolsey, &c.* That relative ought very seldom to be omitted, and is here particularly requisite to preserve a symmetry between the two members of the sentence. You omit the relative too often, which is a colloquial barbarism, as Mr. Johnson calls it.

"Your periods are sometimes, though not often, too long. Suard will be embarrassed with them, as the modish French style runs into the other extreme."[1] . . . .

[1] Considering the critical attention which Mr. Hume appears to have given to the *minutiæ* of style, it is somewhat surprising that he should himself fail so frequently both in purity and grammatical correctness. In these respects, his historical compositions will not bear a comparison with those of Dr. Robertson; although they abound, in every page, with what Mr. Gibbon calls "careless inimitable beauties." In his familiar letters the inaccuracies are

Another letter of Mr. Hume's (dated 28th March 1769) relates to the same subject. "I find then that you are not contented without a particular detail of your own praises, and that the very short but pithy letter I wrote you gives you no satisfaction. But what can I say more? The success has answered my expectations: and I, who converse with the Great, the Fair, and the Learned, have scarcely heard an opposite voice, or even whisper to the general sentiment. Only I have heard that the Sanhedrim at Mrs. Macaulay's condemns you as little less a friend to government and monarchy than myself." . . .

Mr. Walpole's congratulations on this occasion were no less warm than Mr. Hume's; but as they are expressed in more general terms, they do not supply materials equally interesting for a quotation. The only letter, besides, from Mr. Walpole relative to Charles V. that has come into my hands, was written before he had proceeded farther in the perusal than the first volume. What the impressions were which that part of the work had left upon his mind, may be judged of from the following paragraph:—

"Give me leave, Sir, without flattery, to observe to yourself, what is very natural to say to others. You are almost the single, certainly the greatest instance, that sound parts and judgment can attain every perfection of a writer, though it be buried in the privacy of retired life and deep study. You have neither the prejudices of a recluse, nor want any of the taste of a man of the world. Nor is this polished ease confined to your works, which parts and imitation might possibly seize. In the few hours I passed with you last summer I was struck with your familiar acquaintance with men, and with every topic of conversation. Of your *Scottish History* I have often said, that it seemed to me to have been written by an able ambassador, who had seen much of affairs. I do not expect to

more numerous than might have been expected from one accustomed so much to write with a view to publication; nor are these negligences *always* compensated by that happy lightness and ease which he seems to have been studious to attain.

find less of that penetration in your *Charles*. Why should I not say thus much to you? Why should the language of flattery forbid truth to speak its mind, merely because flattery has stolen truth's expressions? Why should you be deprived of the satisfaction of hearing the impression your merit has made? You have sense enough to be conscious that you deserve what I have said; and though modesty will forbid you to subscribe to it, justice to me and to my character, which was never that of a flatterer, will oblige you silently to feel, that I can have no motive but that of paying homage to superior abilities."

Lord Lyttleton was another correspondent with whom Dr. Robertson had occasional communications. The first of his letters was an acknowledgment to him for a present of *Charles V.*; and is valuable on account of its coincidence with a letter of Mr. Hume's formerly quoted, in which he recommended to Dr. Robertson to write lives in the manner of Plutarch.

"I don't wonder that your sense of the public expectation gives you some apprehensions; but I know that the historian of Mary Queen of Scots cannot fail to do justice to any great subject; and no greater can be found in the records of mankind than this you have now chosen. Go on, dear Sir, to enrich the English language with more tracts of modern history. We have nothing good in that way, except what relates to the island of Great Britain. You have talents and youth enough to undertake the agreeable and useful task of giving us all the lives of the most illustrious princes who have flourished since the age of Charles V. in every part of the world, and comparing them together, as Plutarch has done the most celebrated heroes of Greece and Rome. This will diffuse your glory as a writer farther than any other work. All nations will have an equal interest in it; and feel a gratitude to the stranger who takes pains to immortalize the virtues of those to whom he is only related by the general sympathy of sentiment and esteem. Plutarch was a Greek, which made him less impartial between his countrymen and the Romans in weighing their comparative merit, than you would be in contrasting a Frenchman with a

German, or an Italian with a Spaniard, or a Dutchman with a Swede. Select, therefore, those great men out of different countries, whose characters and actions may be best compared together, and present them to our view, without that disguise which the partiality of their countrymen or the malice of their enemies may have thrown upon them. If I can animate you to this, posterity will owe me a very great obligation."

I shall close these extracts with a short letter from Voltaire, dated 26th February 1778, from the *Château de Ferney.*

"Il y a quatre jours que j'ai reçu le beau présent dont vous m'avez honoré. Je le lis malgré les fluxions horribles qui me font craindre de perdre entièrement les yeux. Il me fait oublier tous mes maux. C'est à vous et à M. Hume qu'il appartient d'écrire l'Histoire. Vous êtes éloquent, savant, et impartial. Je me joins à l'Europe pour vous estimer."

While Dr. Robertson's fame was thus rapidly extending wherever the language in which he wrote was understood and cultivated, he had the singular good fortune to find in M. Suard, a writer fully capable of transfusing into a language still more universal, all the spirit and elegance of the original. It appears from a letter preserved among Dr. Robertson's papers, that M. Suard was selected for this undertaking by the well-known Baron d'Holbach. He has since made ample additions to his fame by his own productions; but, if I am not mistaken, it was his translation of *Charles V.* which first established his reputation, and procured him a seat in the French Academy.[1]

The high rank which this second publication of Dr. Robertson's has long maintained in the list of our English classics, is sufficient to justify the warm encomiums I have already transcribed from the letters of his friends. To the general expressions of praise, however, which they have bestowed on it, I shall take the liberty of adding a few remarks on some of those specific excellences by which it appears to me to be more peculiarly distinguished.

[1] See Note D.

Among these excellences, a most important one arises from the address displayed by the author in surmounting a difficulty, which has embarrassed, more or less, all the historians who have attempted to record the transactions of the two last centuries. In consequence of those relations which connect together the different countries of Modern Europe as parts of one great system, a general knowledge of the contemporary situation of other nations becomes indispensable to those who would fully comprehend the political transactions of any one state at a particular period. In writing the history of a great nation, accordingly, it is necessary to connect with the narrative occasional episodes with respect to such foreign affairs as had an influence on the policy of the Government, or on the fortunes of the people. To accomplish this with success, by bestowing on these digressions perspicuity and interest, without entering into that minuteness of detail which might mislead the attention of the reader from the principal subject, is unquestionably one of the most difficult tasks of an historian; and in executing this task, Dr. Robertson's judgment and skill will not suffer by a comparison with those displayed by the most illustrious of his rivals.

In the work, however, now under our consideration, he has aimed at something more; for while he has recorded, with admirable distinctness, the transactions of a particular reign, (preserving his episodes in so just a subordination to his main design, that they seldom produce any inconvenient distraction of attention or of interest,) he has contrived, by happy transitions, to interweave so many of the remarkable events which happened about the same time in other parts of Europe, as to render his *History of Charles V.* the most instructive introduction that has yet appeared to the general history of that age. The advantage of making the transactions of a particular nation, and still more the reign of a particular sovereign, a groundwork for such comprehensive views of human affairs, is sufficiently obvious. By carrying on a connected series of important events, and indicating their relations to the contemporary history of mankind, a *meridian* is traced (if I may

use the expression) through the vast and crowded map of time; and a line of reference is exhibited to the mind, for marking the bearings of those subordinate occurrences, in the multiplicity of which its powers would have been lost.

In undertaking a work on a plan so philosophical in the design, but so difficult in the execution, no period, perhaps, in the history of the world, could have been more happily chosen than that which commences with the sixteenth century; in the course of which, (as he himself observes,) "the several powers of Europe were formed into one great political system, in which each took a station, wherein it has since remained with less alteration than could have been expected, after the shocks occasioned by so many internal revolutions and so many foreign wars."

Mr. Hume, in a letter which I had occasion already to quote, objects to him that "his hero is not very interesting," and it must undoubtedly be acknowledged, that the characteristical qualities of his mind were less those of an amiable man than of a great prince. His character, however, on the whole, was singularly adapted to Dr. Robertson's purpose, not only as the ascendant it secured to him in the political world marks him out indisputably as the principal figure in that illustrious group which then appeared on the Theatre of Europe, but as it everywhere displays that deep and sagacious policy, which, by systematizing his counsels, and linking together the great events of his reign, inspires a constant interest, if not for the personal fortunes of the man, at least for the magnificent projects of the politician. Nor is the character of Charles, however unamiable, without a certain species of attraction. The reader who is previously acquainted with the last scenes of his enterprising and brilliant life, while he follows him through the splendid career of his ambition, can scarcely avoid to indulge occasionally those moral sympathies which the contrast awakens, and to borrow from the solitude of the cloister some prophetic touches, to soften the sternness of the warrior and the statesman.

With a view to facilitate the study of this important portion

of Modern History, Dr. Robertson has employed a preliminary volume in tracing the progress of society in Europe, from the subversion of the Roman Empire to the era at which his narrative commences. In this instance, as well as in the First Book of his *Scottish History*, he has sanctioned by his example a remark of Father Paul, that an historical composition should be as complete as possible in itself, exhibiting a series of events intelligible to every reader, without any reference to other sources of information. On the minuteness and accuracy of Dr. Robertson's researches concerning the state of Europe during the Middle Ages, I do not presume to offer an opinion. They certainly exhibit marks of very extensive and various reading, digested with the soundest judgment, and of which the results appear to be arranged in the most distinct and luminous order. At the time when he wrote, such an arrangement of materials was the grand *desideratum*, and by far the most arduous task; nor will the merit of having first brought into form a mass of information so little accessible till then to ordinary readers, be ever affected by the controversies that may arise concerning the justness of particular conclusions. If, in some of these, he has been censured as hasty by later writers, it must be remembered how much their labours were facilitated by what he did to open a field for their minuter diligence, and that, by the scrupulous exactness with which he refers to his authorities, he has himself furnished the means of correcting his errors. One thing is certain, (and it affords no inconsiderable testimony both to the felicity of his choice in the various historical subjects he undertook, and to the extent of his researches in the investigation of facts,) that the most acute and able of all his adversaries[1] was guided by Dr. Robertson's example in almost all his literary undertakings, and that his curiosity has seldom led him into any path, where the genius and industry of his predecessor had not previously cleared the way.

In no part of Dr. Robertson's works has he displayed more remarkably than in this introductory volume, his patience in

[1] Dr Gilbert Stuart.

research, his penetration and good sense in selecting his information, or that comprehension of mind, which, without being misled by system, can combine with distinctness and taste, the dry and scattered details of ancient monuments. In truth, this *Dissertation*, under the unassuming title of an Introduction to the History of Charles V., may be regarded as an introduction to the History of Modern Europe. It is invaluable, in this respect, to the historical student; and it suggests, in every page, matter of speculation to the politician and the philosopher.

It will not, I hope, be imputed to me as a blameable instance of national vanity, if I conclude this Section with remarking the rapid progress that has been made in our own country during the last fifty years, in tracing the origin and progress of the present establishments in Europe. Montesquieu undoubtedly led the way, but much has been done since the publication of his works, by authors whose names are enrolled among the members of this Society. "On this interesting subject," says Mr. Gibbon, "a strong ray of philosophic light has broke from Scotland in our own times, and it is with private as well as public regard, that I repeat the names of Hume, Robertson, and Adam Smith."[1] It was, indeed, a subject worthy of their genius, for in the whole history of human affairs, no spectacle occurs so wonderful in itself, or so momentous in its consequences, as the growth of that system which took its rise from the conquests of the barbarians. In consequence of these, the western parts of Europe were overspread with a thick night of superstition and ignorance, which lasted nearly a thousand years; yet this event, which had at first so unpromising an aspect, laid the foundation of a state of society far more favourable to the general and permanent happiness of the human race than any which the world had hitherto seen;—a state of society which required many ages to bring it to that condition which it has now attained, and which will probably require ages more to bestow on it all the perfection of which it seems to be gradually susceptible. By dividing Europe into a

[1] *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chap. LXI.

number of large monarchies, agreeing with each other in their fundamental institutions, but differing in the nature both of their moral and physical advantages, and possessing, at the same time, such measures of relative force as to render them objects of mutual respect, it multiplied the chances of human improvement,—secured a mutual communication of lights among vast political communities, all of them fit to contribute their respective shares to the common stock of knowledge and refinement,—and sheltered science and civilisation, till they had time to strike their roots so deep, and to scatter their seed so wide, that their final progress over the whole globe can now be checked only by some calamity fatal to the species.

SECTION III.

CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT.—HISTORY OF AMERICA.

AFTER an interval of eight years from the publication of *Charles the Fifth*, Dr. Robertson produced the *History of America*;—a work which, by the variety of research and of speculation that it exhibits, enables us to form a sufficient idea of the manner in which he had employed the intervening period.

In undertaking this task, the author's original intention was only to complete his account of the great events connected with the reign of Charles V.; but perceiving, as he advanced, that a History of America, confined solely to the operations and concerns of the Spaniards, would not be likely to excite a very general interest, he resolved to include in his plan the transactions of all the European nations in the New World. The origin and progress of the British Empire there, he destined for the subject of one entire volume, but afterwards abandoned, or rather suspended, the execution of this part of his design, for reasons mentioned in his Preface.

In the view which I have hitherto given of Dr. Robertson's literary pursuits, I have endeavoured not only to glean all the scanty information which his papers supply, concerning the progress of his studies, but to collect whatever memorials they afford of his intercourse with those to whom he appears to have been more peculiarly attached by sentiments of esteem or of friendship. In following this plan, while I have attempted (in conformity to the precept of an eloquent critic[1]) to add to the

[1] Abbé [afterwards Cardinal] Maury.

interest of my narrative, "by surrounding the subject of it with his contemporaries," I have aimed also to select such passages from the letters of his correspondents, as were at once calculated to illustrate the characters of the writers, and to reflect some light on that of the person to whom they are addressed. It appeared to me to be possible to convey in this manner a livelier and juster idea of the more delicate features of their minds, than by any description however circumstantial; and at the same time to avoid, by a proper discrimination in the selection of materials, those frivolous or degrading details which, in the present times, are so frequently presented to the public by the indiscretion of editors. The epistolary fragments, accordingly, interwoven with my own composition, have all a reference to the peculiar object of this *Memoir;* and I cannot help indulging a hope, that they will amply compensate, by the value they possess as authentic relics of the individuals whose friendships they record, for the trespasses they have occasioned against that unity of style which the rules of criticism enjoin.

In the further prosecution of this subject, I shall adhere to the same general plan; without, however, affecting that minuteness of illustration which I was anxious to bestow on the first steps of Dr. Robertson's literary progress. The circle of his acquaintance, besides, was now so extended, and the congratulations which his works drew to him so multiplied, that my choice must necessarily be limited to the letters of those whose names render their judgments of men and books objects of public curiosity. The Society will regret with me, that among these correspondents the name of Mr. Hume is not to be found. He died in the year 1776, the year immediately preceding that in which the *History of America* was published.[1]

Mr. Gibbon made his first appearance as an historian a few months before Mr. Hume's death, and began a correspondence with Dr. Robertson the year following. A letter, dated from Paris, 14th July 1777, in acknowledgment of a present of Dr. Robertson's book, appears plainly from the contents to have been one of the first that passed between them.

[1] See Note E.

"When I ventured to assume the character of historian, the first, the most natural, but at the same time the most ambitious wish which I entertained, was to deserve the approbation of Dr. Robertson and Mr. Hume, two names which friendship united, and which posterity will never separate. I shall not therefore attempt to dissemble, though I cannot easily express, the honest pleasure which I received from your obliging letter, as well as from the intelligence of your most valuable present. The satisfaction which I should otherwise have enjoyed in common with the public, will now be heightened by a sentiment of a more personal and flattering nature; and I shall often whisper to myself that I have in some degree obtained the esteem of the writer whom I admire.

"A short excursion which I have made to this place during the summer months, has occasioned some delay in my receiving your letter, and will prevent me from possessing, till my return, the copy of your *History*, which you so politely desired Mr. Strahan to send me. But I have already gratified the eagerness of my curiosity and impatience; and though I was obliged to return the book much sooner than I could have wished, I have seen enough to convince me that the present publication will support, and, if possible, extend the fame of the author; that the materials are collected with care, and arranged with skill; that the progress of discovery is displayed with learning and perspicuity; that the dangers, the achievements, and the views of the Spanish adventurers, are related with a temperate spirit; and that the most original, perhaps the most curious portion of human manners, is at length rescued from the hands of sophists and declaimers. Lord Stormont, and the few in this capital who have had an opportunity of perusing the *History of America*, unanimously concur in the same sentiments; your work is already become a favourite subject of conversation, and M. Suard is repeatedly pressed, in my hearing, to fix the time when his translation will appear."[1]

[1] The letter from which the foregoing passage is extracted, has been already published by Lord Sheffield in the posthumous works of Mr. Gibbon. As the copy found among Dr. Robertson's papers corresponds *verbatim* with that

In most of the other letters received by Dr. Robertson on this occasion, I have not remarked anything very interesting. Mr. Walpole is liberal, as formerly, in his praise, but does not enter so much into particular criticisms; and as for his other correspondents, (among whom were various names of the first distinction in the kingdom,) the greater part of them were probably restrained, by motives of delicacy, from offering anything more than general expressions of admiration, to a writer whose fame was now so fully established. A letter from William Lord Mansfield, though it bears no marks of the superior mind of that eminent man, is valuable at least as a testimony of his respect for Dr. Robertson; nor will it, perhaps, when contrasted with the splendour of his professional exertions, be altogether unacceptable to those who have a pleasure in studying the varieties and the limits of human genius.

"I delayed returning you my warmest acknowledgments for your most valuable present, till I could say that I had enjoyed it. Since my return from the circuit, I have read it with infinite pleasure. It is inferior to none of your works, which is saying a great deal. No man will now doubt but that you have done judiciously in making this an entire separate work, and detaching it from the general history. Your account of the science of navigation and naval discovery is admirable, and equal to any historical map of the kind. If I knew a pen equal to it, I would advise the continuation down to the next arrival of Captain Cook. Nothing could be more entertaining or more instructive. It is curious that all great discoveries are made, as it were by accident, when men are in search of something else. I learn from you that Columbus did not, as a philosopher, demonstrate to himself that there must be such a portion of the earth as America is, but that meaning to go to the East Indies, he stumbled on the West. It is a more interesting speculation to consider how little political wisdom had to do, and how much has arisen from chance; in the peopling, government, laws, and constitution of the New World. You

which Mr. Gibbon appears to have retained in his own possession, it affords a proof of the care which he bestowed on his epistolary compositions.

shew it strongly in the revolutions and settlement of Spanish America. I hope the time will come for fulfilling the engagement you allude to in the beginning of your Preface. You will then shew how little political wisdom had to do in forming the original settlements of English America. Government left private adventurers to do as they pleased, and certainly did not see in any degree the consequence of the object."

One letter, containing the judgment of an author who is supposed to have employed his own abilities in a very masterly sketch on the same subject, I shall publish entire. It is long for a quotation; but I will not mutilate what comes from the pen of Mr. Burke.

"I am perfectly sensible of the very flattering distinction I have received in your thinking me worthy of so noble a present as that of your History of America. I have however suffered my gratitude to lie under some suspicion, by delaying my acknowledgment of so great a favour: but my delay was only to render my obligation to you more complete, and my thanks, if possible, more merited. The close of the session brought a great deal of very troublesome, though not important business on me at once. I could not go through your work at one breath at that time, though I have done it since. I am now enabled to thank you, not only for the honour you have done me, but for the great satisfaction, and the infinite variety and compass of instruction, I have received from your incomparable work. Everything has been done which was so naturally to be expected from the author of the History of Scotland, and of the age of Charles V. I believe few books have done more than this, towards clearing up dark points, correcting errors, and removing prejudices. You have too the rare secret of rekindling an interest on subjects that had so often been treated, and in which everything which could feed a vital flame appeared to have been consumed. I am sure I read many parts of your History with that fresh concern and anxiety which attend those who are not previously apprized of the event. You have, besides, thrown quite a new light on the present state of the Spanish provinces, and furnished both

materials and hints for a rational theory of what may be expected from them in future.

"The part which I read with the greatest pleasure, is the discussion on the manners and character of the inhabitants of that New World. I have always thought with you, that we possess at this time very great advantages towards the knowledge of human nature. We need no longer go to history to trace it in all stages and periods. History, from its comparative youth, is but a poor instructor. When the Egyptians called the Greeks children in antiquities, we may well call them children; and so we may call all those nations which were able to trace the progress of society only within their own limits. But now the great map of mankind is unrolled at once, and there is no state or gradation of barbarism, and no mode of refinement which we have not at the same moment under our view; the very different civility of Europe and of China; the barbarism of Persia and of Abyssinia; the erratic manners of Tartary and of Arabia; the savage state of North America and of New Zealand. Indeed, you have made a noble use of the advantages you have had. You have employed philosophy to judge on manners, and from manners you have drawn new resources for philosophy. I only think that in one or two points you have hardly done justice to the savage character.

"There remains before you a great field. *Periculosæ plenum opus aleæ tractas, et incedis per ignes suppositos cineri doloso.* When even those ashes will be spread over the present fire, God knows. I am heartily sorry that we are now supplying you with that kind of dignity and concern, which is purchased to history at the expense of mankind. I had rather, by far, that Dr. Robertson's pen were only employed in delineating the humble scenes of political economy, than the great events of a civil war. However, if our statesmen had read the book of human nature instead of the Journals of the House of Commons, and history instead of Acts of Parliament, we should not by the latter have furnished out so ample a page for the former. For my part, I have not been, nor am I very forward in my speculations on this subject. All that I have ventured

to make have hitherto proved fallacious. I confess, I thought the Colonies left to themselves could not have made anything like the present resistance to the whole power of this country and its allies. I did not think it could have been done without the declared interference of the House of Bourbon. But I looked on it as very probable that France and Spain would before this time have taken a decided part. In both these conjectures I have judged amiss. You will smile when I send you a trifling temporary production, made for the occasion of a day, and to perish with it, in return for your immortal work. But our exchange resembles the politics of the times: you send out solid wealth, the accumulation of ages, and in return you get a few flying leaves of poor American paper. However, you have the mercantile comfort of finding the balance of trade infinitely in your favour; and I console myself with the snug consideration of uninformed natural acuteness, that I have my warehouse full of goods at another's expense.

"Adieu, Sir, continue to instruct the world; and whilst we carry on a poor unequal conflict with the passions and prejudices of our day, perhaps with no better weapons than other passions and prejudices of our own, convey wisdom at our expense to future generations."

After these testimonies to the excellence of the *American History*, joined to twenty years' possession of the public favour, it may perhaps be thought presumption in me to interpose my own judgment with respect to its peculiar merits. I cannot help, however, remarking (what appears still more characteristical of this than of any of Dr. Robertson's other works) the comprehensive survey which he has taken of his vast and various subject, and the skilful arrangement by which he has bestowed connexion and symmetry on a mass of materials so shapeless and disjointed. The penetration and sagacity displayed in his delineation of savage manners, and the unbiassed good sense with which he has contrasted that state of society with civilized life, (a speculation in the prosecution of which so many of his predecessors had lost themselves in vague declamation or in paradoxical refinement,) have been much and

deservedly admired. His industry also, and accuracy in collecting information with respect to the Spanish system of colonial policy, have received warm praise from his friends and from the public. But what, perhaps, does no less honour to the powers of his mind than any of these particulars, is, the ability and address with which he has treated some topics that did not fall within the ordinary sphere of his studies, more especially those which border on the province of the natural historian. In the consideration of these, although we may perhaps, in one or two instances, have room to regret that he had not been still more completely prepared for the undertaking by previous habits of scientific disquisition, we uniformly find him interesting and instructive in the information he conveys, and happy beyond most English writers in the descriptive powers of his style. The species of description too in which he excels, is peculiarly adapted to his subject; distinguished, not by those picturesque touches which vie with the effects of the pencil in presenting local scenery to the mind, but by an expression to which language alone is equal, of the grand features of an unsubdued world. In these passages he discovers talents, as a writer, different from anything that appears in his other publications; a compass and richness of diction the more surprising, that the objects described were so little familiarized to his thoughts, and, in more than one instance, rivalling the majestic eloquence which destined Buffon to be the historian of Nature.

After all, however, the principal charm of this, as well as of his other Histories, arises from the graphical effect of his narrative, wherever his subject affords him materials for an interesting picture. What force and beauty of painting in his circumstantial details of the voyage of Columbus; of the first aspect of the New Continent; and of the interviews of the natives with the Spanish adventurers! With what animation and fire does he follow the steps of Cortes through the varying fortunes of his vast and hazardous career, yielding, it must be owned, somewhat too much to the influence of the passions which his hero felt, but bestowing, at the same time, the warm tribute of ad-

miration and sympathy on the virtues and fate of those whom he subdued! The arts, the institutions, and the manners of Europe and of America, but above all, the splendid characters of Cortes and of Guatimozin, enable him, in this part of his work, to add to its other attractions that of the finest contrasts which occur in history.

On these and similar occasions, if I may be allowed to judge from what I experience in myself, he seizes more completely than any other modern historian the attention of his reader, and transports him into the midst of the transactions which he records. His own imagination was warm and vigorous; and, although in the conduct of life it gave no tincture of enthusiasm to his temper, yet, in the solitude of the closet, it attached him peculiarly to those passages of history which approach to the romantic. Hence many of the characteristical beauties of his writings; and hence too, perhaps, some of their imperfections. A cold and phlegmatic historian, who surveys human affairs like the inhabitant of a different planet, if his narrative should sometimes languish for want of interest, will at least avoid those prepossessions into which the writer must occasionally be betrayed, who, mingling with a sympathetic ardour among the illustrious personages whose story he contemplates, is liable, while he kindles with their generous emotions, to be infected by the contagion of their prejudices and passions.

These effects, resulting naturally from a warm imagination, were heightened in Dr. Robertson by the vigour of an active and aspiring mind. It was not from the indifference produced by indolence or abstraction that he withdrew from the business of life to philosophy and letters. He was formed for action no less than speculation, and had fortune opened to him a field equal to his talents, he would have preferred, without hesitation, (if I do not greatly mistake his character,) the pursuits of the former to those of the latter. His studies were all directed to the great scenes of political exertion, and it was only because he wanted an opportunity to sustain a part in them himself, that he submitted to be an historian of the actions of others. In all his writings the influence of the circumstances which I

have now suggested, may, I think, be traced, but in none of them is it so strongly marked as in the *History of America.* There he writes with the interest of one who had been himself an actor on the scene, giving an ideal range to his ambition among the astonishing events which he describes.

Perhaps, indeed, it must be owned on the other hand, that if the excellences of this performance are on a scale commensurate to the magnitude of the subject, it is in some respects more open to censure than any of his other productions. A partiality for the charms of eloquence and the originality of system displayed in the writings of Buffon and De Pauw,—a partiality natural to the enthusiasm of a congenial mind, has unquestionably produced a facility in the admission of many of their assertions which are now classed with the prejudices of former times. After allowing, however, to this charge all the weight it possesses, it ought to be remembered, in justice to Dr. Robertson, what important additions have been made since the time he wrote, to our knowledge both of America and of its aboriginal inhabitants; and that it is not from our present stock of information, but from what was then current in Europe, that an estimate can fairly be formed of the extent and accuracy of his researches. When he hazarded himself, like Columbus, in traversing an unknown ocean, and in surveying a New World, much, it might be expected, would be left to reward the industry of future adventurers. The disposition he has shewn to palliate or to veil the enormities of the Spaniards in their American conquests, is a blemish of a deeper and more serious nature, to the impression of which I must content myself with opposing those warm and enlightened sentiments of humanity which in general animate his writings. A late candid and well-informed author, accordingly, after asserting that the conquest of the New World was effected (on a low estimate) by the murdering of ten millions of the species, and that the accounts of this carnage are authenticated beyond the possibility of dispute, suggests an apology for Dr. Robertson by remarking, " that this is one of those melancholy passages in the history of human nature, where a benevolent mind, shrink-

ing from the contemplation of facts, wishes to resist conviction, and to relieve itself by incredulity."[1]

The Spanish nation were not insensible of what they owed to Dr. Robertson for "the temperate spirit" (as Mr. Gibbon expresses it) with which he had related this portion of their story. "On the 8th of August 1777, he was unanimously elected a Member of the Royal Academy of History at Madrid, in testimony of their approbation of the industry and care with which he has applied to the study of Spanish History, and as a recompense for his merit in having contributed so much to illustrate and spread the knowledge of it in foreign countries." The Academy, at the same time, appointed one of its members to translate the *History of America* into Spanish; and it is believed that considerable progress had been made in the translation when the Spanish Government, judging it inexpedient that a work should be made public in which the nature of the trade with America and the system of Colonial administration were so fully explained, interposed its authority to stop the undertaking.

As the volumes which have been now under our review did not complete Dr. Robertson's original design, he announced in the Preface his intention to resume the subject at a future period, suspending, in the meantime, the execution of that part of his plan which related to the British settlements, "on account of the *ferment* which then agitated our North American Colonies." A fragment of this intended work, which has been published since his death, while it illustrates the persevering ardour of his mind, must excite a lively regret in all who read it, that a history so peculiarly calculated by its subject to co-extend his fame with the future progress of our language in the regions beyond the Atlantic, had not been added to the other monuments of his genius.

The caution which Dr. Robertson observed in his expressions concerning the American war, suggests some doubts about his sentiments on that subject. In his letters to Mr. Strahan he

[1] Bryan Edwards—*History of the West Indies.*

writes with greater freedom, and sometimes states, without reserve, his opinions of men and measures.

One or two of these passages (which I transcribe without any comment) appear to me to be objects of curiosity, as they illustrate Dr. Robertson's political views, and I flatter myself they will now be read without offence, when the factions to which they allude are almost effaced from our recollection by the more interesting events of a later period. I need scarcely premise, that in quoting Dr. Robertson's opinions I would by no means be understood to subscribe to them as my own.

In a letter, dated October 6, 1775, he writes thus:—"I agree with you in sentiment about the affairs of America. Incapacity, or want of information, has led the people employed there to deceive the Ministry. Trusting to them, they have been trifling for two years, when they should have been serious, until they have rendered a very simple piece of business extremely perplexed. They have permitted colonies, disjoined by nature and situation, to consolidate into a regular systematical confederacy; and when a few regiments stationed in each capital would have rendered it impossible for them to take arms, they have suffered them quietly to levy and train forces, as if they had not known and seen against whom they were prepared. But now we are fairly committed, and I do think it fortunate that the violence of the Americans has brought matters to a crisis too soon for themselves. From the beginning of the contest I have always asserted that independence was their object. The distinction between *taxation* and *regulation* is mere folly. There is not an argument against our right of taxing that does not conclude with tenfold force against our power of regulating their trade. They may profess or disclaim what they please, and hold the language that best suits their purpose; but if they have any meaning, it must be that they should be free states, connected with us by blood, by habit, and by religion, but at liberty to buy and sell and trade where and with whom they please. This they will one day attain, but not just now, if there be any degree of political wisdom or vigour remaining. At the same time one cannot but regret that prosperous and growing

states should be checked in their career. As a lover of mankind I bewail it; but as a subject of Great Britain, I must wish that their dependence on it should continue. If the wisdom of Government can terminate the contest with honour instantly, that would be the most desirable issue. This, however, I take to be *now* impossible; and I will venture to foretell, that if our leaders do not at once exert the power of the British Empire in its full force, the struggle will be long, dubious, and disgraceful. We are past the hour of lenitives and half exertions. If the contest be protracted, the smallest interruption of the tranquillity that now reigns in Europe, or even the appearance of it, may be fatal.

"It is lucky that my American History was not finished before this event. How many plausible theories that I should have been entitled to form, are contradicted by what has now happened!"

To this extract, I shall only add a few sentences from a letter written to the same correspondent, about the affairs of America, nine years before, at the time of the repeal of the Stamp Act.

"I am glad to hear the determination of the House of Commons concerning the Stamp Act. I rejoice, from my love of the human species, that a million of men in America have some chance of running the same great career which other free people have held before them. I do not apprehend revolution or independence sooner than these must and should come. A very little skill and attention in the art of governing may preserve the supremacy of Britain as long as it ought to be preserved. You can do me no favour more obliging, than that of writing me often an account of all occurrences in the debates on this affair. I am much interested in the subject; very little in the men who act on either side. I am not weak enough greatly to admire their virtues, nor so factious as to adopt their passions."

SECTION IV.

CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT.—HISTORICAL DISQUISITION CONCERNING INDIA.—GENERAL REMARKS ON DR. ROBERTSON'S MERITS AS AN HISTORIAN.

In consequence of the interruption of Dr. Robertson's plans produced by the American Revolution, he was led to think of some other subject which might, in the meantime, give employment to his studious leisure. A letter, dated July 1778, to his friend the Rev. Mr. Waddilove, (now Dean of Ripon,) contains some important information with respect to his designs at this period.

"The state of our affairs in North America is not such as to invite me to go on with my History of the New World. I must wait for times of greater tranquillity, when I can write and the public can read with more impartiality and better information than at present. Every person with whom I conversed in London confirmed me in my resolution of making a pause for a little, until it shall be known in what manner the ferment will subside. But as it is neither my inclination nor interest to be altogether idle, many of my friends have suggested to me a new subject, the History of Great Britain from the Revolution to the Accession of the House of Hanover. It will be some satisfaction to me to enter on a domestic subject, after being engaged so long on foreign ones, where one half of my time and labour were employed in teaching myself to understand manners, and laws, and forms, which I was to explain to others. You know better than anybody how much pains I bestowed in studying the constitution, the manners, and the commerce of Spanish America. The Review contained

in the first volume of *Charles V.* was founded on researches still more laborious. I shall not be involved in the same painful inquiries, if I undertake the present work. I possess already as much knowledge of the British Government and laws as usually is possessed by other persons who have been well educated and have lived in good company. A minute investigation of facts will be the chief object of my attention. With respect to these, I shall be much aided by the original papers published by Sir John Dalrymple and Macpherson, and lately by Lord Hardwicke. The *Memoirs of Noailles,* concerning the French negotiations in Spain, contain very curious information. I have got a very valuable collection of papers from the Duke of Montague, which belonged to the Duke of Shrewsbury, and I am promised the large collection of the Duke of Marlborough, which were formerly in the hands of Mr. Mallet. From these and other materials I hope to write a History which may be both entertaining and instructive. I know that I shall get upon dangerous ground, and must relate events concerning which our political factions entertain very different sentiments. But I am little alarmed with this. I flatter myself that I have temper enough to judge with impartiality; and if, after examining with candour I do give offence, there is no man whose situation is more independent."

Whatever the motives were which induced him to relinquish this project, it is certain that it did not long occupy his thoughts. From a letter of Mr. Gibbon, it would appear to have been abandoned before the end of the year 1779. The passage is interesting, not only as it serves to ascertain the fact, but as it suggests a valuable hint with respect to a different historical subject.

"I remember a kind of engagement you had contracted to repeat your visit to London every second year, and I look forwards with pleasure to next spring when your bond will naturally become due. I should almost hope that you would bring with you some fruits of your leisure, had I not been informed that you had totally relinquished your design of continuing Mr. Hume's *History of England.* Notwithstanding the just and

deep sense which I must entertain (if the intelligence be true) of our public loss, I have scarcely courage enough to blame you. The want of materials, and the danger of offence, are two formidable obstacles for an historian who wishes to instruct, and who is determined not to betray his readers. But if you leave the narrow limits of our island, there still remain, without returning to the troubled scene of America, many subjects not unworthy of your genius. Will you give me leave, as a vague and indigested hint, to suggest the History of the Protestants in France; the events are important in themselves, and intimately connected with the great Revolutions of Europe; some of the boldest or most amiable characters of modern times, the Admiral Coligny, Henry IV., &c., would be your peculiar heroes; the materials are copious, and authentic, and accessible; and the objects appear to stand at that just distance which excites curiosity without inspiring passion. Excuse the freedom, and weigh the merits (if any) of this proposal."[1]

As I have had very little access to see any of Dr. Robertson's answers to the letters of his correspondents, I am ignorant what reply he made to this suggestion of Mr. Gibbon, as well as of the circumstances that induced him to lay aside his plans with respect to the History of England. It is impossible, however, not to feel much regret that he did not carry them into execution. In spite of the obstacles which Mr. Gibbon mentions, there can be little doubt that the work would have been an important accession to English literature, and, in all probability, from the interesting nature of the subject, the most popular of his performances. The intrigues of the different factions during the reign of Queen Anne would have afforded an ample field for the exercise of his cool and discriminating judgment; the campaigns of Marlborough deserved such an historian, while the literature and philosophy of that memorable period would have given full employment to those critical powers which he so eminently possessed, and of which he has unfortunately left no monument behind him. The slight sketches of this kind, interspersed with the narrative of Mr.

[1] See Note F.

Hume's *History*, have always been favourite passages with readers of taste; and, if I may be permitted to judge from Dr. Robertson's conversation, he would not, in this species of composition, have been surpassed by any of his contemporaries.

I have not heard of any other work that he projected after this period. He seems, indeed, soon to have abandoned all thoughts of writing any more for the public, and to have indulged the idea of prosecuting his studies in future for his private amusement. His circumstances were independent; he was approaching to the age of sixty, with a constitution considerably impaired by a sedentary life; and a long application to the compositions he had prepared for the press, had interfered (it is presumable) with much of the gratification he might have enjoyed, if he had been at liberty to follow the impulse of his own taste and curiosity. Such a sacrifice must be more or less made by all who devote themselves to letters, whether with a view to emolument or to fame; nor would it perhaps be easy to make it, were it not for the prospect (seldom, alas! realized) of earning by their exertions that learned and honourable leisure which he was so fortunate as to attain. He retired from the business of the ecclesiastical courts about the same time; and, for seven or eight years, divided the hours which he could spare from his professional duties between the luxury of reading and the conversation of his friends.

The activity of his mind, in the meantime, continued unimpaired; and the habits of study he had so long been accustomed to, gave a certain scope and connexion even to his historical recreations. To one of these, which, from its accidental connexion with some of his former works, engaged his attention more closely than his ordinary pursuits, the public is indebted for a valuable performance, of which the materials seem almost insensibly to have swelled to a volume, long after his most intimate friends imagined that he had renounced all thoughts of the press. The *Disquisition concerning Ancient India*, which closed his historical labours, took its rise (as he himself informs us) "from the perusal of Major Rennell's *Memoir* for illustrat-

ing his map of Indostan. This suggested to him the idea of examining more fully than he had done in the introductory book to his *History of America*, into the knowledge which the Ancients had of that country, and of considering what is certain, what is obscure, and what is fabulous in the accounts of it which they have handed down to us." "In undertaking this inquiry," he adds, "he had originally no other object than his own amusement and instruction; but in carrying it on, and consulting with care the authors of antiquity, some facts hitherto unobserved, and many which had not been examined with proper attention, occurred; new views opened; his ideas gradually extended, and became more interesting, till at length he imagined that the result of his researches might prove amusing and instructive to others."

Such is the account given by himself of the origin and progress of a disquisition begun in the sixty-eighth year of his age, and in twelve months brought to a conclusion; exhibiting, nevertheless, in every part, a diligence in research, a soundness of judgment, and a perspicuity of method, not inferior to those which distinguish his other performances. From the nature of the subject it was impossible to render it equally amusing to ordinary readers, or to bestow on his language the same splendour and variety; but the style possesses all the characteristical beauties of his former compositions, as far as they could with propriety be introduced into a discourse, of which the general design excluded every superfluous and ambitious ornament. The observations in the *Appendix* upon the character, the manners, and the institutions of the people of India, present a valuable outline of all the most important information concerning them, which was then accessible to the philosophers of Europe, and if they have already lost part of their interest in consequence of the astonishing discoveries which have been since brought to light in Asia, by a fortunate and unexampled combination of genius, learning, and official rank, in a few individuals whose names do honour to this country, they at least evince that ardent and enlightened curiosity which animated the author's inquiries in his most advanced years, and afford a

proof that his mind kept pace to the last, with the progress of historical knowledge.

In these observations too, we may occasionally trace the influence of still higher motives, to which he has himself alluded, with an affecting solemnity, in the last sentences which he addressed to the public. "If I had aimed," says he, "at nothing else than to describe the civil polity, the arts, the sciences, and religious institutions, of one of the most ancient and most numerous races of men, that alone would have led me into inquiries and discussions both curious and instructive. I own, however, that I have all along kept in view an object more interesting, as well as of greater importance; and entertain hopes, that if the account which I have given of the early and high civilisation of India, and of the wonderful progress of its inhabitants in elegant arts and useful science, shall be received as just and well established, it may have some influence upon the behaviour of Europeans towards that people. It was by an impartial and candid inquiry into their manners, that the Emperor Akber was led to consider the Hindoos as no less entitled to protection and favour than his other subjects, and to govern them with such equity and mildness as to merit from a grateful people the honourable appellation of 'The Guardian of Mankind.' If I might presume to hope, that the description I have given of the manners and institutions of the people of India could contribute in the smallest degree, and with the most remote influence, to render their character more respectable, and their condition more happy, I should close my literary labours with the satisfaction of thinking that I have not lived or written in vain."[1]

In concluding this general review of Dr. Robertson's publications, our attention is naturally led, in the first place, to the extent and variety of his historical researches. In this respect he has certainly not been surpassed by any writer of the present times, nor would it perhaps be easy to name another, who has united to so luminous an arrangement of his materials, and

[1] See Note G.

such masterly skill in adorning them, an equal degree of industry and exactness in tracing them to their original sources. After a minute examination of the most disputed passages of his first performance, a late author[1] has ventured to pronounce him "the most faithful of historians," and I have no doubt that this honourable appellation will be sanctioned by those who shall examine his other works with the same acuteness, accuracy, and candour.

In the art of narration too, which, next to correctness in the statement of facts, is the most essential qualification of an historian, Dr. Robertson's skill is pre-eminent; perhaps I might venture to say, that in this art his chief and characteristical excellence as an historian consists. I do not, at present, allude merely to the richness of colouring with which he occasionally arrests the attention, but to the distinctness, perspicuity, and fulness, with which he uniformly communicates historical information, carefully avoiding every reference to whatever previous knowledge of the subject his reader may accidentally possess. In this distinctness and perspicuity, so conspicuous in the great models of antiquity, some modern writers of unquestionable talents have failed to a degree which renders all their other merits of little value;—a failure more particularly observable, since it became fashionable, after the example of Voltaire, to connect with the view of political transactions, an examination of their effects on the manners and condition of mankind, and to blend the lights of philosophy with the appropriate beauties of historical composition. In consequence of this innovation, while the province of the historian has been enlarged and dignified, the difficulty of his task has increased in the same proportion, reduced, as he must frequently be to the alternative, either of interrupting unseasonably the chain of events, or by interweaving disquisition and narrative together, of sacrificing clearness to brevity. By few writers of the present age has this combination of philosophy with history been more frequently attempted than by Dr. Robertson; and by none have the inconveniences which it threatens been more

[1] Mr. Laing.

successfully avoided. In the former respect his merit is great, but in the latter, he may be safely proposed as a pattern for imitation.

Nor does the beauty of his narrative consist only in the luminous distinctness, and picturesque selection of his details. In a passage formerly quoted from one of Mr. Walpole's letters, it is mentioned, among the other recommendations of the *History of Scotland*, that, "although composed of pieces of information, each of which would make a separate memoir, yet the whole is hurried on into one uninterrupted story." The remark is just, and it points at an excellence of the highest order, conspicuous in all Dr. Robertson's publications,—the continuity which unites together the different parts of his subject, in consequence of the address and felicity displayed in his transitions. It is this last circumstance which bestows on his works that unceasing interest which constitutes one of the principal charms in tales of fiction; an interest easy to support in relating a series of imaginary adventures, but which, in historical composition, evinces, more than anything else, the hand of a master.

The attainment of these different perfections was undoubtedly much facilitated by the plan which he adopted, of throwing into the form of Notes and Illustrations, whatever critical or scientific discussions appeared to him to interfere with the peculiar province of history. In one of the last conversations I had with him, he mentioned this as an improvement of considerable importance in historical writing; and his final judgment on the subject will be allowed to have great weight in favour of that mode of arrangement which he adopted. On this point, I know, there is a wide diversity of opinion: nor do I think myself entitled to pronounce with confidence upon either side, where the best judges have hesitated in their decision. Our late excellent colleague Mr. Smith, carried to such a length his partiality to the ancient forms of classical composition, that he considered every species of note as a blemish or imperfection; indicating, either an idle accumulation of superfluous particulars, or a want of skill and compre-

hension in the general design. Dr. Douglas, too, the present Bishop of Salisbury, in a letter addressed to Dr. Robertson on occasion of his American History, appears dissatisfied with the local separation of the notes from the text; without, however, disputing the general principle on which the arrangement of his materials proceeds. "I think," says he, "that your Notes and Illustrations very frequently contain matter of the greatest importance to the strengthening the arguments and conclusions you adopt in the body of the book; and they are so widely separated by the mode of your publication, that the reader cannot see, at one view, the great merit of your work. Mr. Gibbon adopted this method, in imitation of your *Charles V.*; but I believe he has found the wishes of the public in favour of another arrangement; for I understand, in a new edition of his *History* which we are soon to have, the Notes and Illustrations are to be put at the bottom of the pages to which they refer.—I know you will excuse this liberty; and very probably, as you have considered the matter more accurately than such readers as I am, you can give very substantial reasons for preferring the plan of throwing the Notes and Illustrations to the end of the volume."

On a question of this sort, the suggestions of so learned and judicious a critic are undoubtedly entitled to peculiar deference: but I must be permitted to express my doubts whether he has added to their weight, by appealing to the arrangement of Mr. Gibbon, which, in this instance, has always appeared to me to be inconvenient in the extreme. In no species of writing is it agreeable to have the attention so frequently withdrawn from the text; but in historical writing it is impossible to devise a more effectual expedient for counteracting the effects of the author's art. The curious research and the epigrammatic wit so often displayed in Mr. Gibbon's Notes, and which sometimes render them more amusing than even the eloquent narrative which they are meant to illustrate, serve only to add to the embarrassment occasioned by this unfortunate distribution of his materials. He seems, indeed, from a letter published in his *Posthumous Works*, to have been fully satisfied, after a trial of

both plans, that the preference was due to that which, after Dr. Robertson's example, he had originally pursued. "I cannot be displeased," he observes, "with the two numerous and correct impressions which have been published for the use of the Continent at Basil in Switzerland. Of their fourteen octavo volumes, the two last include the whole body of the notes. The public importunity had forced me to remove them from the end of the volume to the bottom of the page; but I have often repented of my compliance."[1]

It is remarkable that no alternative should have occurred to Mr. Gibbon between placing all his notes at the bottom of the page, or collecting them all in the form of an Appendix. In the first edition of his first volume, he followed Dr. Robertson implicitly in adopting the latter method; which, although by far the more unexceptionable of the two, might be obviously improved by some limitations. Mr. Hume, in a letter to Mr. Strahan, objects to it strongly. "One is plagued with Gibbon's notes, according to the present method of printing the book. When a note is announced, you turn to the end of the volume, and there you often find nothing but a reference to an authority. All these authorities ought only to be printed at the margin or the bottom of the page."[2]

What Mr. Hume here remarks concerning references to authorities, may be extended to those short explanatory sentences, which, being intended to facilitate the reader's progress, should unquestionably be brought under his eye at the same time with the passage they are intended to elucidate. Dr. Robertson, as well as Mr. Gibbon, seems to have overlooked this distinction between explanatory hints, and *notes* intended for the gratification of the curious; and hence have arisen (at least in part) those inconveniences in the technical arrangement of his volumes, of which Dr. Douglas was led to complain.

A still more important blemish, however, it must be confessed, than what this respectable correspondent has specified, is sometimes the real source of the imperfection he has re-

[1] Vol. I. p. 178. [2] Gibbon's *Posthumous Works*, Vol. I. p. 500.

marked; I mean that a considerable portion of the matter which is parcelled out among the notes, ought to have been incorporated with the text. Where a writer finds it necessary to enter into speculation and discussion, the whole of his argument should undoubtedly be stated at once, and not broken down into fragments, which the reader is to collect from different parts of the book. In those dissertations, therefore, which form so considerable a part both of the *History of Charles V.* and of *America*, it would perhaps have been better if the author had adhered less closely to the plan which he has so judiciously adopted in his historical narrative. The arguments which recommend it in the latter species of composition, it is sufficiently evident, do not apply to it when introduced into the former.

After all, whoever attempts to instruct the world by any literary undertaking, whether historical or speculative, will find it necessary, for the complete satisfaction of accurate inquirers, to engage in occasional discussions which could not be introduced into the body of the work, without digressions inconsistent with a simple and distinct arrangement; nor compressed into notes at the bottom of the page, without stopping the reader's progress and misleading his attention. No writer has been more completely aware of this than Mr. Hume, who, in all his publications, both historical and philosophical, has distinguished carefully those incidental suggestions which are necessary to prevent any hesitation about the text from the critical disquisitions useful for satisfying men of curious research, or for obviating the doubts of more refined speculation. Dr. Robertson's subjects, in all his Histories excepting that of Scotland, engaged him in inquiries more open to controversy, and in arguments resting upon information less accessible to ordinary readers, than those of Mr. Hume. His proofs and illustrations, accordingly, bear a far greater proportion to the size of his volumes; but I am inclined to think, that if examined with proper attention, the arrangement of them will be found (with a few exceptions) to reflect no less honour on his taste and discernment.

The stress which Dr. Robertson himself laid on this pecu-

liarity in his mode of composition, added to the indecision of Mr. Gibbon with respect to its propriety, will, I hope, apologize sufficiently for the minuteness with which some of the foregoing particulars are stated.—The general question concerning the expediency of imitating the Ancients, in limiting an author's intercourse with his readers, to what is conveyed in the text, does not seem to me to admit of discussion. Considered as sources of authentic and of accurate information, the value of the classics is infinitely diminished by this very circumstance; and few, I believe, have studied Mr. Smith's works, (particularly his *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*,) without regretting, on some occasions, the omission of his authorities; and, on others, the digressions into which he has been led, by conforming so scrupulously to the example of antiquity.

Of Dr. Robertson's merits as an historian, so far as they are connected with the genius of the language in which he wrote, it does not become a native of this part of the island to express a decided opinion. And, accordingly, in the few remarks which I am to hazard on that subject, although I shall state my own judgment with freedom, I would be understood to write with all possible diffidence.

The general strain of his composition is flowing, equal, and majestic; harmonious beyond that of most English writers, yet seldom deviating, in quest of harmony, into inversion, redundancy, or affectation. If, in some passages, it may be thought that the effect might have been heightened by somewhat more of variety in the structure and cadence of his periods, it must be recollected that this criticism involves an encomium on the beauty of his style; for it is only where the ear is habitually gratified, that the rhythm of composition becomes an object of the reader's attention.

In comparing his turn of expression with that of the classical writers of England, a difference may, I think, be perceived; originating in the provincial situation of the country where he received his education and spent his life; and, if I am not

much mistaken, the same observation may be extended, in a greater or less degree, to most of our contemporaries who have laboured under similar disadvantages. I do not allude, at present, to what are commonly called *Scotticisms;* for from these Dr. Robertson's works have been allowed, by the most competent judges, to be remarkably free; but to an occasional substitution of general or of circuitous modes of expression, instead of the simple and specific English phrase. An author who lives at a distance from the acknowledged standard of elegance, writes in a dialect different from that in which he is accustomed to speak; and is naturally led to evade, as much as possible, the hazardous use of idiomatical phrases, by the employment of such as accord with the general analogy of the language. Hence in all the lighter and more familiar kinds of writing, the risk of sacrificing ease and vivacity, and what Dr. Johnson calls *genuine Anglicism,*[1] in order to secure correctness and purity; and hence the difficulties with which those of our countrymen have had to struggle, who have aimed at the freedom of the epistolary style, or who have attempted to catch the shadowy and fleeting forms of comic dialogue. The peculiarity in the manner of Livy, censured by Asinius Pollio, was probably of a similar description; arising less from an admixture of *Paduan* idioms than from the absence of such as marked the dialect of *Rome.* "In Tito Livio," says Quintilian, "miræ facundiæ viro, putat inesse Pollio Asinius quandam Patavinitatem. Quare, si fieri potest, et verba omnia, et vox, hujus alumnum Urbis oleant; ut oratio Romana planè videatur, non civitate donata."[2]

If, however, in these and a few other respects, important advantages are possessed by those whose standard of propriety is always before them in their ordinary habits of conversation and of business, it must perhaps be granted, on the other hand, that an ear thus familiarized from infancy to phrases which it has been accustomed to retain, without any selection or any reference to general principles, can scarcely fail to have some

[1] "If Addison's language had been less idiomatical, it would have lost something of its genuine Anglicism."—*Lives of the Poets.*

[2] *Institutiones,* L. VIII. c. i.

effect in blunting an author's discrimination between the established modes of classical expression and the accidental jargon of the day. Illustrations of this remark might be easily collected from writers of the highest and most deserved reputation, more particularly from some who have cultivated, with the greatest success, the appropriate graces of the English tongue. Even the works of Dr. Middleton, which have been often recommended to Scotchmen as the safest models for their imitation, abound with instances of colloquial language, sanctioned probably by the authority of the fashionable speakers of his time, but which, I should suppose, would now be considered as vulgarisms by such of his countrymen as have formed their taste on the compositions either of an earlier or of a later period.

In guarding against these temporary modes of speech, the provincial residence of a Scotchman may sometimes have its use, by teaching him to distrust his ear as an arbiter of elegance, and to appeal on every questionable point to the practice of those whose established reputation gives the stamp of propriety to the phraseology they have employed. If his composition be deficient in ease, it may be expected not to fall under the ordinary standard in point of purity; nay, it is not impossible, that in his solicitude to avoid idiomatical phrases, he may be occasionally led to animate and to ennoble his diction; or, by uncommon and fortunate combinations of words, to give to familiar ideas the charm of novelty.

The species of composition to which Dr. Robertson directed his studies, was peculiarly adapted to his local situation, by affording him an opportunity of displaying all the talents he possessed, without imposing on him a trial of his powers in those kinds of writing where a Scotchman is most likely to fail. In delineating the characters of princes, statesmen, and warriors, or in recording events that have happened on the great theatre of public affairs, a certain elevation of language is naturally inspired by the magnitude of the subject. The engaging and pathetic details of domestic life vanish before the eye which contemplates the fortunes of nations, and the revolutions

of empire; and there is even a gravity of manner, exclusive of everything familiar or flippant, which accords with our idea of him who sits in judgment on the generations that are past. It may, perhaps, be questioned by some, whether Dr. Robertson has not carried to an extreme his idea of what he has himself called the *dignity of history;* but, whatever opinion we form on this point, it cannot be disputed, that his plan of separating the materials of historical composition from those which fall under the provinces of the antiquary, and of the writer of memoirs, was on the whole happily conceived, and that one great charm of his works arises from the taste and judgment with which he has carried it into execution. Nor has he suffered this scrupulous regard to the unity of historical style to exclude that variety which was necessary for keeping alive the reader's attention. Whenever his subject admits of being enriched or adorned by political or philosophical disquisition, by picturesque description, or by the interesting details of a romantic episode, he scruples not to try his strength with those who have excelled the most in these different departments of literature; uniformly, however, avoiding to mingle in the humble scenes of ordinary life, or to meet his rivals on any ground where he did not feel himself completely their equal.

To this systematical selection of the more regular and analogical forms of construction, is to be ascribed, in a considerable degree, his popularity among foreigners, who unite in esteeming him not only as one of the most eloquent, but as one of the most intelligible of our writers. And, it is presumable, that the same circumstance will secure in his favour the suffrages of posterity, when the passing idioms generated by the capricious modes of our own times, shall be antiquated or forgotten.[1]

I have only to add, that some of the foregoing observations apply more strongly to Dr. Robertson's earlier than to his later publications. In the *History of Charles V.*, and still more in that of *America*, he ventures on expressions which he would not have hazarded before the establishment of his literary name; and accordingly, it may be doubted, whether in conse-

[1] See Note II.

quence of this circumstance, he did not lose in purity of diction what he gained in ease and freedom. Perhaps, on the whole, it will be found, that of all his performances *Charles V.* is that which unites the various requisites of good writing in the greatest degree. The style is more natural and flowing than that of the *History of Scotland;* while, at the same time, idiomatical phrases are introduced with so sparing and timid a hand, that it is easy to perceive the author's attention to correctness was not sensibly diminished. In the *History of America*, although it contains many passages equal, if not superior, to anything else in his writings, the composition does not seem to me to be so uniformly polished as that of his former works, nor does it always possess, in the same degree, the recommendations of conciseness and simplicity.[1]

[1] See Note T.

SECTION V.

REVIEW OF THE MORE ACTIVE OCCUPATIONS OF DR. ROBERTSON'S LIFE—CONCLUSION OF THE NARRATIVE—SKETCH OF HIS CHARACTER.

In reviewing the History of Dr. Robertson's Life, our attention has hitherto been confined to those pursuits which formed the habitual occupation of his mind, and which have left behind them unperishable monuments. His life, however, was not devoted wholly to the cultivation of letters. His talents fitted him in an eminent degree for the business of the world; and the station in which Providence placed him opened to him a field, which, however unequal to his ambition or to his genius, afforded him the means of evincing what he might have accomplished, if his sphere of exertion had been more extensive and brilliant.

Among the active scenes in which he had an opportunity to engage, the most conspicuous was presented to him by the Supreme Ecclesiastical Court in Scotland. Of the constitution of this Court, accordingly, which differs in some remarkable particulars from the clerical convocations in other Christian countries, a general outline is necessary, in order to convey a just idea of the abilities which secured to him, for a long course of years, an unrivalled influence in guiding its deliberations.[1]

[1] For the materials both of this outline and of the subsequent view of Dr. Robertson's system of ecclesiastical policy, I am indebted to a paper drawn up (at the request of Dr. Robertson's son) by the Rev. George Hill, D.D., Principal of St. Mary's College in the University of St. Andrews; a gentle-

"The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland is composed of representatives from the presbyteries,—from the royal boroughs,—from the four universities,—and from the Scots Church of Campvere in Holland. The presbyteries send two hundred and ninety members, of whom two hundred and one are ministers, and eighty-nine lay-elders; the royal boroughs send sixty-seven members, all of whom are laymen; the universities send five members, who may be either laymen, or ministers holding an office in the university; and the Church of Campvere sends two members, one minister and one lay-elder. The whole number is three hundred and sixty-four, of whom two hundred and two are ministers, and one hundred and sixty-two laymen; including in the latter class the members from the universities. The annual sittings of the Assembly continue only for ten days; but a committee of the whole House (called the Commission) has four stated meetings in the year, for the despatch of whatever business the General Assembly has been unable to overtake.[1]

"In subordination to this Supreme Court, there is a series of inferior judicatories, rising, one above another, in authority.—The lowest of these is the *Kirk-Sessions*, or Parochial Consistories, composed of the ministers, together with the lay-elders of their respective parishes. The ministers of a number

man intimately connected with Dr. Robertson by friendship, and highly respected by him for the talents and eloquence which he has for many years displayed in the Ecclesiastical Courts. In general, I have transcribed Dr. Hill's words, taking the liberty occasionally to make such slight alterations on the language as were necessary for preserving some degree of uniformity in the style of my narrative; and a few retrenchments, which the plan of this Memoir rendered unavoidable. That the public, however, may not lose any part of so valuable a communication, I have inserted in the Appendix the paragraphs which are here omitted.

As Dr. Hill's paper was submitted to the examination, and received the unqualified approbation of three of Dr. Robertson's most confidential friends,* it may be regarded as an authentic statement of his general principles of Church government. For the sake of connexion, I have adopted into this Section such parts of it as seemed to me to be necessary for completing the history of his life; abstaining, however, scrupulously from hazarding any ideas of my own, on the subject to which it relates.

[1] See Note K.

* Drs. Blair, Carlyle, and Grieve.

of contiguous parishes, together with certain representatives from the Kirk-Sessions, form a *Presbytery;* and a plurality of presbyteries (differing in number according to accidental circumstances) form a provincial *Synod.*

"While the constitution of the Scottish Church admits of no superiority of one minister above another, it requires from all its individual members, and from all its inferior judicatories, strict obedience to those who are placed in authority over them. Every court is bound to lay the record of all its proceedings, from time to time, before the tribunal which is its immediate superior; any part of its proceeding may be brought, by appeal or complaint, under the review of a higher jurisdiction; and every minister, when he receives orders, comes under a solemn engagement, 'to assert, maintain, and defend the doctrines, discipline, and government of the Church; and never to attempt anything, directly or indirectly, which may tend to its subversion or prejudice.'

"In consequence of this subordination of judicatories, the General Assembly determines, as the Court of last resort, all the causes brought under its review, and has the power of enforcing, without control, obedience to its decrees. It possesses also extensive legislative powers, as it may, with the concurrence of a majority of presbyteries, enact laws for the government of the whole Church.

"By the Act of 1592, which gave a legal establishment to the form of Church government now delineated, the Patron of a vacant parish was entitled to present to the presbytery a person properly qualified: and the presbytery were required, after subjecting the presentee to certain trials and examinations, of which they were constituted the judges, 'to ordain and settle him as minister of the parish, provided no relevant objection should be stated to his life, doctrine, and qualifications.' This right of presentation, however, although conferred by the fundamental charter of Presbyterian government in Scotland, was early complained of as a grievance; and accordingly it was abolished by an act passed under the Usurpation. At the Restoration it was again recovered, but it was retained only for

a few years; the Revolution having introduced a new system, which vested the right of election in the Heritors, Elders, and Heads of families in the parish. The 10th of Queen Anne at last restored the rights of Patrons; but the exercise of these rights was found to be so extremely unpopular, that ministers were generally settled, till after the year 1730, in the manner prescribed by the Act of King William.

"During this long period, an aversion to the law of patronage took deep root in the minds of the people; and the circumstances of the times were such as to render it inexpedient for the Church Courts to contend with a prejudice so inveterate and universal.

"When the Presbyterian establisment fell a sacrifice to the policy introduced at the Restoration, the ministers who refused to conform to Prelacy were ejected from their churches, and underwent a severe persecution. The firmness which they displayed on this occasion exhibits a strength of character which has never been surpassed; but their situation, while deprived of the countenance of law, and left entirely to the guidance of private conscience, was necessarily such as to inspire *independent* principles inconsistent with regular subordination and discipline; and, accordingly, at the Revolution, when the Presbyterian government was re-established, and many of the ejected ministers restored to their pulpits, they brought along with them into the Church a spirit scarcely compatible with the connexion in which it stood with the paramount authority of the state. Their successors, trained in the same sentiments, saw the right of patronage revived in times which they regarded with a jealous eye; and without allowing themselves to weigh the expediency of that mode of settlement, they considered it as an appendage of Episcopacy, which it was the duty of every good Presbyterian to oppose. While the people therefore resisted with violence the first attempt which was made about the year 1730 to exercise this right, the Church Courts, although they could not entirely disregard the law, contrived, in many instances, to render it ineffectual, and sanctioned by their authority the prevailing prejudices against it. They admitted

it as an incontrovertible principle in Presbyterian church government, that a presentee, although perfectly well qualified, and unexceptionable in life and doctrine, was nevertheless inadmissible to his clerical office, till the concurrence of the people who were to be under his ministry had been regularly ascertained. The form of expressing this concurrence was by the subscription of a paper termed a *Call;* which was considered as a step so indispensable towards constituting the pastoral relation, that the Church Courts, when dissatisfied with it as an expression of the general wishes of the parish, sometimes set aside the presentee altogether; and when they did authorize a settlement, proceeded in a manner which sufficiently implied a greater respect for the call than for the presentation.

"The circumstances understood to be necessary for constituting an adequate *call*, were unsusceptible of a precise definition. The unanimous consent of landholders, elders, and heads of families, was seldom to be looked for; nor was even an absolute majority considered as indispensable, if the concurrence afforded a reasonable prospect of an harmonious and useful settlement. This principle of decision was so vague in itself, and so arbitrary in its application, that much was left in the Church Courts to the private judgment of individuals, and much to their prejudices and passions; while the people, finding that a noisy and strenuous opposition seldom failed of success, were encouraged to prosecute their object by tumult and violence. Many of the clergy, considering it as a matter of conscience not to take any share in the settlement of an obnoxious presentee, refused on such occasions to carry into execution the orders of their superiors; and, such was the temper of the times, that the leading men of the Assembly, although they wished to support the law of the land, found themselves obliged to have recourse to expedients,—imposing slight censures on the disobedient, and appointing special committees (whom it was found sometimes necessary to protect by a military force) to discharge the duties which the others had declined.

"Measures of this kind, pursued with little variation for about twenty years, had so relaxed the discipline of the Church, that

individuals openly claimed it as a right to disobey its sentences, whenever their disobedience was justified, according to the best of their judgment, by a principle of conscience.

"Such was the state of the ecclesiastical establishment in Scotland when Dr. Robertson and his friends began to take an active share in its business. Dissatisfied with the system adopted by his predecessors, and convinced that the more free any constitution is, the greater is the danger of violating its fundamental laws, his vigorous and enlightened mind suggested to him the necessity of opposing more decisive measures to these growing disorders, and of maintaining the authority of the Church by enforcing the submission of all its members. The two capital articles by which he conceived presbytery to be distinguished from every other ecclesiastical establishment, was the *parity of its ministers*, and the *subordination of its judicatories*.—'Wherever there is a subordination of courts,' (as he has himself observed in an authentic document of his ecclesiastical principles,) 'there is one court that must be supreme; for subordination were in vain, if it did not terminate in some last resort. Such a supreme judicature is the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland; and therefore, if its decisions could be disputed and disobeyed by inferior courts with impunity, the Presbyterian constitution would be entirely overturned. On this supposition, there is no occasion for the Church of Scotland to meet in its General Assemblies any more; its government is at an end; and it is exposed to the contempt and scorn of the world, as a Church without union, order, or discipline; destitute of strength to support its own constitutions, and falling into ruins by the abuse of liberty.'

"A question which came under the consideration of the Assembly in the year 1751, when he spoke for the first time in that Supreme Court, afforded him an opportunity of unfolding his general principles of ecclesiastical government. The conduct of a clergyman, who had disobeyed a sentence of a former Assembly, gave rise to a warm discussion; in the course of which, Dr. Robertson, supported by a few of his friends, contended for the expediency of a severe and exemplary sentence.

But this doctrine was then so little understood or relished, that he was left in an inconsiderable minority.

"The *Commission* of that Assembly, at their meeting, in November 1751, ordered the Presbytery of Dunfermline, which had already been guilty of disobedience, to admit Mr. Richardson as minister of Inverkeithing; intimating to them, at the same time, that in case of their continued contumacy, the Commission was to proceed, at their next meeting in March, to a very high censure. The Presbytery again disobeyed; and yet the Commission, with a preposterous lenity, suffered their conduct to pass with impunity. The inconsistency and inexpediency of this sentence were urged strenuously by Dr. Robertson and his friends, who, in their *dissent*, or protest against it, have left a valuable record of the general principles on which they acted. The paper is still extant, and though evidently a hasty composition, bears in various passages, the marks of Dr. Robertson's hand.[1]

"Dr. Robertson argued this cause in the General Assembly 1752; and such was the impression made by the argument contained in the protest, and more fully illustrated in his speech, that the Supreme Court reversed the judgment of the Commission, and deposed one of the ministers of the Presbytery of Dunfermline, for disobeying the orders of his superiors.

"This decision was the complete triumph of the principles for which Dr. Robertson and his friends had struggled. It put an end to those temporary expedients and devices which had hitherto been adopted in the settlement of parishes: it put an end to those extraordinary committees which Assemblies had been in use to appoint for relieving disobedient presbyteries from their duty; and it administered to the inferior judicatories, as well as to individuals, a useful lesson of that subordination which the peace of society requires.

"The success of these attempts had probably some effect in determining Dr. Robertson to continue his attention to the affairs of the Church: more especially, after his office in the University put it in his power to be returned annually as a

[1] See Note L.

representative to the General Assembly. By an uninterrupted attendance in that Court for nearly twenty years, he acquired an intimate acquaintance with the whole train of its business; while the influence which he thus secured was increased and confirmed by his conciliating manners,—by the charms of his conversation,—and by the celebrity of his name. He had the happiness also of being warmly supported by most of the friends who joined him in the Assembly 1751; and who, without any jealousy of the ascendant which he possessed, arranged themselves with cordiality under his standard. The period from his appointment as Principal of the University till his retreat from public life, came, accordingly, to be distinguished by the name of Dr. Robertson's *administration:* a name which implied, not any appointment from Government, nor any power in the distribution of favours, but merely the weight he derived from the confidence of a great majority of his brethren, who approved of the general principles on which he acted.

"The circumstances which chiefly distinguished his system of policy were, *first*, a steady and uniform support of the law of Patronage; and, *secondly*, an impartial exercise of the judicial Power of the Church.[1]

"In the former of these respects, his exertions are supposed by his friends, not only to have produced in the ecclesiastical establishment a tranquillity unknown in former times, but to have contributed, in no small degree, to the peace and good order of the country. The public language of the Church seems to bear testimony to the prevalence of these ideas. For a long series of years annual instructions had been given to the *Commission*, 'to make due application to the King and Parliament, for *redress of the grievance of patronage*, in case a favourable opportunity for doing so should occur.' But these instructions were omitted in 1784, soon after Dr. Robertson retired from the business of the Assembly, and they have never since been renewed.

"A systematical regularity, to which the Church of Scotland

[1] See Note M.

had been little accustomed, in the exercise of its judicial power, was another effect of the ascendant which Dr. Robertson possessed in the conduct of its business.

"A Court so popular in its constitution as the General Assembly, is but ill calculated for the patient and dispassionate investigation necessary for the administration of justice. As its annual sittings, too, continue only for a few days, its mode of procedure (irregular and loose as it is in many respects) is very imperfectly understood by the great majority of clerical members, who enjoy a seat in it only once in four or five years: hence, an inattention to forms, and a disposition to undervalue their importance, when they appear to stand in the way of immediate expediency. To correct, as far as possible, this unfortunate bias, inherent in the constitution of all popular tribunals, Dr. Robertson felt it to be his duty to employ all his abilities, convinced that a wise and impartial administration of justice can only be effectually secured by a strict adherence to established rules. A complete acquaintance with these, which he soon acquired from his regular attendance on the deliberations of the Assembly, gave him a decided superiority over those who were only occasionally members; and he was enabled gradually to enforce their strict observance, by the confidence which was generally reposed in his principles and his talents.

"Such were the objects which Dr. Robertson had chiefly in view as an ecclesiastical leader, and which he prosecuted, during thirty years, with so great steadiness and success, that not only the system introduced by him continues still in vigour, but the decisions which he dictated form a sort of *Common Law* of the Church."[1]

With respect to the various incidental discussions in which he was, on different occasions, called on to take an active concern, it is impossible for me to enter into details. One of these, however, which occurred towards the close of his public life, is of too memorable a nature to be passed over in silence.

[1] Thus far I have availed myself of Dr. Hill's communication. A more full illustration of some of the particulars here stated, will be found in the Appendix.

The disturbances occasioned in Scotland in 1779, by the proposed extension to that part of the kingdom of the repeal of the penal laws against Roman Catholics, are well known to all who have the slightest acquaintance with the history of that period, and are still fresh in the recollection of the greater part of this Society. Some of us too are able to bear testimony, from what fell under our own immediate observation, to the firmness and tranquillity which Dr. Robertson displayed at a very critical juncture, when, after repeated acts of successful and unpunished outrage, committed in different parts of this city, a furious populace threatened an attack on his house, and were only restrained by a military force, from sacrificing his life to their vengeance.

The leading principles which on that occasion directed his conduct in the Church Courts, will be best understood from a statement of facts, which formed part of one of his speeches in the subsequent Assembly.[1]

"The first intimation I had of any intention to grant relief to Papists from the rigour of penal statutes, was by the newspapers. Though I had observed with pleasure the rapid progress of liberal sentiments in this enlightened age; though I knew that science and philosophy had diffused the spirit of toleration through almost every part of Europe; yet I was so well acquainted with the deep-rooted aversion of Britons to the doctrines and spirit of Popery, that I suspected this motion for giving relief to Papists to be premature. I was afraid, on the one hand, that the liberal sentiments of those by whom it was made might induce them to grant too much. I dreaded, on the other, that past offences might be imputed to the Catholics of the present age, and exclude them from that degree of indulgence which I considered as no less beneficial to the nation,

[1] The following extract is transcribed, with some trifling verbal corrections, from an account of the proceedings of the General Assembly, published in the *Scots Magazine* for 1779. As the account in general (I am assured) is executed with correctness and impartiality, the *substance* of Dr. Robertson's speech may be presumed to be faithfully stated; but, in other respects, ample allowances must be made for the inaccuracies to be expected from an anonymous reporter, writing (as is probable) from memory, or from imperfect notes.

than suitable to the spirit of the Gospel. But when I observed the uncommon unanimity with which the Bill was carried through both Houses; when I saw Ministry and Opposition vying with each other in activity to forward it; when I beheld that respectable body who assume to themselves the distinguishing appellation of *Old Whigs* taking the lead avowedly in supporting it; when I observed a bench of Bishops, of whom I may justly say, that in learning, in decency of manners, and in zeal for the Protestant religion, they are not inferior to any of their predecessors, co-operating heartily with the other promoters of that Bill, my curiosity to know precisely the nature and extent of the indulgence granted, became very great. Upon perusing the Bill itself, all my apprehensions vanished; the relief given appeared neither too great nor too little. By the statute of last session, no political power is conferred on Papists. They are not entitled to hold any public office. They can neither elect, nor be elected members of any corporation, far less can they choose, or be chosen, members of the House of Commons. In consequence of this statute, an English Papist has not acquired the privileges of a citizen, he is restored only to the rights of a man. By a law passed in a season of jealousy, alarm, and faction, Papists were rendered incapable of inheriting property by succession or conveyance, of transmitting it to others, or of acquiring it by purchase; and the ecclesiastics of that religion who should take upon them the education of youth, were to be punished with perpetual imprisonment. It is from these penalties and disabilities alone, that they are now relieved. They may now inherit, they may devise, they may purchase. Formerly they were in a state of proscription and incapacity; now they are rendered what the law calls *personæ*, capable of legal functions in the possession and disposal of their own property. Nor are these concessions gratuitous. Before a Papist can enjoy the benefit of them, he must swear allegiance to our gracious Sovereign; he must abjure the Pretender; he must reject as an impious position, that it is lawful to murder or destroy any persons under pretence of their being heretics; he must declare it to be an unchristian

principle, that faith is not to be kept with heretics; he must disclaim the power of the Pope to dispense with the obligation of an oath; he must swear that it is no article of his faith, that a Pope or Council can either depose princes, or exercise any civil or temporal jurisdiction within this realm; in short, he must give every security that the most scrupulous anxiety could devise, to demean himself as a loyal and peaceable subject. These slender rights, the lowest a man can claim or enjoy in a social state, are the amount of all the mighty and dreaded acquisitions made by Papists in virtue of this law. I rejoiced in the temperate wisdom of the Legislature, and foresaw that a wealthy body of subjects in England, and a very numerous one in Ireland, would, instead of continuing adverse to a government which treated them with rigour, become attached to their king and country by the most powerful of all ties, gratitude for favours received, and desire of securing the continuance of favour by dutiful conduct. With such views of the salutary effects of the repeal, it was impossible not to wish that the benefit of it might be extended to the Roman Catholics in Scotland. . . .

"As soon, however, as I perceived the extent and violence of the flame which the discussion of this subject had kindled here, my ideas concerning the expedience, at this juncture of the measure in question, began to alter. For, although I did think, and I do still believe, that if the Protestants in this country had acquiesced in the repeal as quietly as our brethren in England and Ireland, a fatal blow would have been given to Popery in the British dominions: I knew, that in legislation, the sentiments and dispositions of the people for whom laws are made, should be attended to with care. I remembered that one of the wisest men of antiquity declared, that he had framed for his fellow-citizens not the best laws, but the best laws which they could bear. I recollected with reverence, that the Divine Legislator himself, accommodating his dispensations to the frailty of his subjects, had given the Israelites for a season *statutes which were not good.* Even the prejudices of the people are, in my opinion, respectable; and an indulgent

legislature ought not unnecessarily to run counter to them. It appeared manifestly to be sound policy, in the present temper of the people, to soothe rather than to irritate them; and, however ill-founded their apprehensions might be, some concession was now requisite in order to remove them. In every argument against the repeal of the penal laws, what seemed chiefly to alarm my brethren who were adverse to it, was the liberty which, as they supposed, was given by the Act of last session to Popish ecclesiastics to open schools, and take upon them the public instruction of youth. In order to quiet their fears with respect to this, I applied to his Majesty's Advocate and Solicitor-General, and, by their permission, I proposed to a respectable minister and elder of this Church, who deservedly possess much credit with the opposers of this repeal, that such provisos should be inserted in the Bill which was to be moved in Parliament, for restraining the Popish clergy in this point, as would obviate every danger apprehended. These gentlemen fairly told me, that if such a proposition had been made more early, they did not doubt that it might have produced good effects; but, now matters were gone so far, that they were persuaded nothing less would satisfy the people than a resolution to drop the Bill altogether. Persuaded of the truth of what they represented, seeing the alarm spread rapidly in every quarter, and knowing well how imperfectly transactions in this country are understood in the other part of the island, I considered it as my duty to lay before his Majesty's servants in London a fair state of the sentiments of the people in Scotland. My station in the Church, I thought, entitled me to take this liberty in a matter purely ecclesiastical. I flattered myself that my avowed approbation and strenuous support of a measure which had been unhappily so much misunderstood, might give some weight to my representations. I informed them, that the design of extending the repeal of the penal statutes of King William to Scotland, had excited a very general alarm; that the spirit of opposition to this measure spread among the King's most loyal and attached subjects in this country;, that nothing would calm and appease them but

the relinquishing all thoughts of such a Bill; that the procuring of the intended relaxation for a handful of Catholics, was not an advantage to be put in competition with the imprudence of irritating so great a body of well affected subjects; that if the measure were persisted in, fatal effects would follow, and no man, how great soever his sagacity might be, could venture to foretell what would be the extent of the danger, and what the violent operations of an incensed populace; that groundless as the fears of the people might be, it was prudent to quiet them; and that the same wisdom and moderation which had induced Government, some years ago, to repeal the Act for naturalizing the Jews, in consequence of an alarm, as ill-grounded in the southern parts of the island, ought now to make a similar concession from indulgence to the prejudice of the people on this side of the Tweed.

"Such has been the tenor of my conduct. While I thought a repeal of the penal statutes would produce good effects, I supported it openly; when I foresaw bad consequences from persisting in a measure which I had warmly approved, I preferred the public good to my own private sentiments; I honestly remonstrated against it; and I have the satisfaction to think that I am the only private person (as far as I know) in Scotland who applied to those in power in order to prevent that much dreaded repeal, which has been represented as the subversion of every sacred right for which our ancestors contended and suffered." . . .

The last Assembly in which Dr. Robertson sat was that of 1780. While his faculties were yet vigorous, his constitution unbroken, and his influence undiminished, he chose to withdraw from the active scenes in which he had so long borne a part, and to consecrate the remainder of his life to the quiet pursuits of study, and to the pastoral duties of his profession. His retreat was deeply regretted, and sincerely felt by his friends; nor was it less lamented by many individuals of the opposite party in the Church, who, while they resisted his principles of ecclesiastical policy, loved his candour, and respected his integrity.[1]

[1] See Note N.

Among these, there is one whose liberal and affectionate zeal in embalming the memory of a political antagonist, recalls to our recollection, amidst the unrelenting rancour which disgraces the factions of modern times, the memorable tribute which Metellus paid to the virtues of Scipio on the day of his funeral; "*Ite, Filii, celebrate exequias; nunquam Civis majoris funus videbitis.*"[1] I need scarcely, after what I have hinted, mention to the Society the name of Dr. Erskine, of whose *Sermon* on the death of his colleague, it is difficult to say, whether it reflects greater honour on the character of the writer, or of him whom it commemorates. The author will, I hope, pardon me for transcribing one passage, which is intimately connected with this part of my subject, and which combines, with a testimony of inestimable value to Dr. Robertson's fame, some important information which I could not supply from any source of equal authority.

"His speeches in Church Courts were admired by those whom they did not convince, and acquired and preserved to him an influence over a majority in them, which none before him enjoyed; though his measures were sometimes new, and warmly, and with great strength of argument opposed, both from the press and in the General Assembly. To this influence many causes contributed:—his firm adherence to the general principles of Church policy which he early adopted; his sagacity in forming plans; his steadiness in executing them; his quick discernment of whatever might hinder or promote his designs; his boldness in encountering difficulties; his presence of mind in improving every occasional advantage; the address with which, when he saw it necessary, he could make an honourable retreat; and his skill in stating a vote, and seizing the favourable moment for ending a debate, and urging a decision. He guided and governed others, without seeming to assume any superiority over them: and fixed and strengthened his power, by often, in matters of form and expediency, preferring the opinions of those with whom he acted to his own. In former times, hardly any rose up to speak in the General Assembly till

[1] Plinii, *Hist. Nat.*, VII. xliv.

called upon by the *Moderator*, unless men advanced in years, of high rank, or of established characters. His example and influence encouraged young men of abilities to take their share of public business; and thus deprived *Moderators* of an engine for preventing causes being fairly and impartially discussed. The power of others, who formerly had in some measure guided ecclesiastical affairs, was derived from ministers of state, and expired with their fall. His remained unhurt amidst frequent changes of administration. Great men in office were always ready to countenance him, to co-operate with him, and to avail themselves of his aid. But he judged for himself, and scorned to be their slave, or to submit to receive their instructions. Hence, his influence, not confined to men of mercenary views, extended to many of a free and independent spirit, who supported, because they approved, his measures; which others, from the same independent spirit, thought it their duty steadily to oppose.

"Deliberate in forming his judgment, but when formed, not easily moved to renounce it, he sometimes viewed the altered plans of others with too suspicious an eye. Hence there were able and worthy men, of whom he expressed himself less favourably, and whose latter appearances in church judicatories, he censured as inconsistent with principles which they had formerly professed: while they maintained, that the system of managing church affairs was changed, not their opinions or conduct. Still, however, keen and determined opposition to his schemes of ecclesiastical policy, neither extinguished his esteem, nor forfeited his friendly offices, when he saw opposition carried on without rancour, and when he believed that it originated from conscience and principle, not from personal animosity, or envy, or ambition."[1]

I shall not presume to add anything in illustration of these remarks. The greater part of them relate to transactions of which I had no immediate knowledge, and of which I am not a competent judge; and at any rate, no testimony of mine could increase the value of praise from so able and so impartial

[1] *Discourses*, &c., by John Erskine, D.D., [1798,] p. 271.

a hand. Of one quality, however, ascribed to Dr. Robertson by his colleague,—his ability in debate,—I may be allowed to express my own opinion, as I was often led by curiosity, in my early years, to witness the proceedings of the Court where it was principally displayed, and which, since the Union of the Kingdoms, is all that exists in Scotland to preserve the semblance of popular deliberation. This part of his fame will soon rest on tradition only; but by many who are still able to judge from their own recollection, I shall not be accused of exaggeration, when I say, that in *some* of the most essential qualifications of a speaker, he was entitled to rank with the first names which have, in our times, adorned the British Senate. Nor was the opposition with which he had to contend unworthy of his exertions, formidable as it long was in zeal and numbers, and aided by a combination of talents which will not easily be equalled,—the copious and fervid declamation of Crosbie; the classical, argumentative, and commanding eloquence of Dick; and the powerful, though coarse invective of Freebairn, whose name would, in a different age, have been transmitted to posterity with those of the rustic and intrepid apostles who freed their country from the hierarchy of Rome.[1]

The characteristic of Dr. Robertson's eloquence was *persuasion*,—mild, rational, and conciliating, yet manly and dignified. In early life, when forced as a partisan to expose himself to the contentious heat of popular discussion, he is said to have been distinguished by promptitude and animation in repelling the attacks which he occasionally encountered; but long before the period during which I knew him, he had become the acknowledged head of his party, and generally spoke last in the debate; resuming the arguments on both sides with such perspicuity of arrangement and expression, such respect to his antagonists, and such an air of candour and earnestness in everything he said, that he often united the suffrages of the House in favour of the conclusions he wished to establish.

[1] Andrew Crosbie, Esq., Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Advocates; Robert Dick, D.D., one of the Ministers of Edinburgh; the Rev. Mr. Freebairn, Minister of Dumbarton;—all of them died many years before Dr. Robertson.

His pronunciation and accent were strongly marked with the peculiarities of his country; nor was this defect compensated by the graces of his delivery. His manner, however, though deficient in ease, was interesting and impressive, and had something in its general effect, neither unsuitable to his professional station nor to the particular style of his eloquence. His diction was rich and splendid, and abounded with the same beauties that characterize his writings.

In these details, with respect to his ecclesiastical politics, I may perhaps be thought by some to have been more circumstantial than was necessary; but, as he himself always dwelt on that subject with peculiar satisfaction, I could not pass it over more slightly than I have done. Nor is it so foreign, as it may at first appear, to his character as an historian; for, narrow and obscure as his field of action was, it afforded him a closer view than most authors have enjoyed, of the intrigues of contending factions, and an opportunity of studying, though on a scale comparatively small, the passions that decide the fate of nations. In tracing, accordingly, the springs of human conduct, his sagacity is strongly impressed with that knowledge of the world which experience alone can communicate; and even in those characteristical portraits, on which he has lavished all the decorations of his style, he is seldom if ever misled, either by the affectation of eloquence, or of metaphysical refinement, from a faithful adherence to truth and nature.

I would willingly enlarge on his merits in a different department of his professional employments, of which I am more competent to judge from personal knowledge, were I not afraid that my own academical habits might lead me to attach an interest to what would appear of little moment to others. I shall therefore only remark in general, his assiduous attention, amidst his various occupations, both speculative and active, to the minutest duties of his office as head of the University, duties, which nothing but his habits of arrangement and the severest economy of his time, could have enabled him to discharge with so little appearance of hurry or inconvenience. The valuable accession of books which the public library received

while under his administration, was chiefly owing to his prudent and exact application of the very slender funds appropriated to that establishment; the various societies, both literary and medical, which, in this place, have long contributed so essentially to the improvement of the rising generation, were, most of them, either planned or reformed under his direction and patronage; and if, as a seat of learning, Edinburgh has, of late more than formerly, attracted the notice of the world, much must be ascribed to the influence of his example, and to the lustre of his name. The good sense, temper, and address with which he presided for thirty years in our University meetings, were attended with effects no less essential to our prosperity, and are attested by a fact, which is perhaps without a parallel in the annals of any other literary community, that during the whole of that period there did not occur a single question which was not terminated by an unanimous decision.

In consequence of the various connexions with society, which arose from these professional duties, and from the interest which he was led to take, both by his official situation and the activity of his public spirit, in the literary or the patriotic undertakings of others,[1] a considerable portion of Dr. Robertson's leisure was devoted to conversation and company. No man enjoyed these with more relish, and few have possessed the same talents to add to their attractions.

A rich stock of miscellaneous information, acquired from books and from an extensive intercourse with the world, together with a perfect acquaintance at all times with the topics of the day, and the soundest sagacity and good sense applied to the occurrences of common life, rendered him the most agreeable and instructive of companions. He seldom aimed at wit; but, with his intimate friends, he often indulged a sportive and fanciful species of humour. He delighted in good-natured characteristical anecdotes of his acquaintance, and added powerfully to their effect by his own enjoyment in relating them. He was, in a remarkable degree, susceptible of the ludicrous; but on no occasion did he forget the dignity of his character,

[1] See Note O.

or the decorum of his profession; nor did he even lose sight of that classical taste which adorned his compositions. His turn of expression was correct and pure; sometimes, perhaps, inclining more than is expected in the carelessness of a social hour, to formal and artificial periods, but it was stamped with his own manner no less than his premeditated style; it was always the language of a superior and a cultivated mind, and it embellished every subject on which he spoke. In the company of strangers he increased his exertions to amuse and to inform; and the splendid variety of his conversation was commonly the chief circumstance on which they dwelt in enumerating his talents; and yet, I must acknowledge, for my own part, that much as I always admired his powers when they were thus called forth, I enjoyed his society less than when I saw him in the circle of his intimates, or in the bosom of his family.

It only now remains for me to mention his exemplary diligence in the discharge of his pastoral duties,—a diligence which, instead of relaxing as he advanced in life, became more conspicuous, when his growing infirmities withdrew him from business, and lessened the number of his active engagements. As long as his health allowed him, he preached regularly every Sunday; and he continued to do so occasionally till within a few months of his death.

The particular style of his pulpit eloquence may be judged of from the specimen which has been long in the hands of the public; and it is not improbable that the world might have been favoured with others of equal excellence if he had not lost, before his removal from Gladsmuir, a volume of Sermons which he had composed with care. The facility with which he could arrange his ideas, added to the correctness and fluency of his extemporary language, encouraged him to lay aside the practice of writing, excepting on extraordinary occasions, and to content himself, in general, with such short notes as might recall to his memory the principal topics on which he meant to enlarge. To the value, however, and utility of these unpremeditated sermons, we have the honourable testimony of his

learned and excellent colleague, who heard him preach every week for more than twenty years. "His discourses from this place," says Dr. Erskine, "were so plain, that the most illiterate might easily understand them, and yet so correct and elegant that they could not incur their censure, whose taste was more refined. For several years before his death, he seldom wrote his sermons fully, or exactly committed his older sermons to memory, though, had I not learned this from himself, I should not have suspected it, such was the variety and fitness of his illustrations, the accuracy of his method, and the propriety of his style."

His health began apparently to decline in the end of the year 1791. Till then, it had been more uniformly good than might have been expected from his studious habits; but, about this period, he suddenly discovered strong symptoms of jaundice, which gradually undermined his constitution, and terminated at length in a lingering and fatal illness. He had the prospect of death long before him,—a prospect deeply afflicting to his family and his friends, but of which, without any visible abatement in his spirits, he happily availed himself, to adorn the doctrines which he had long taught, by an example of fortitude and of Christian resignation. In the concluding stage of his disorder, he removed from Edinburgh to *Grange House*, in the neighbourhood, where he had the advantage of a freer air, and a more quiet situation, and (what he valued more than most men) the pleasure of rural objects, and of a beautiful landscape. While he was able to walk abroad, he commonly passed a part of the day in a small garden, enjoying the simple gratifications it afforded with all his wonted relish. Some who now hear me will long remember,—among the trivial yet interesting incidents which marked these last weeks of his memorable life,—his daily visits to the fruit-trees, (which were then in blossom,) and the smile with which he, more than once, contrasted the interest he took in their progress with the event which was to happen before their maturity. At his particular desire, I saw him (for the last time) on the 4th of June 1793, when his weakness confined him to his couch, and his articulation was

already beginning to fail; and it is in obedience to a request with which he then honoured me, that I have ventured, without consulting my own powers, to offer this tribute to his memory. He died on the 11th of the same month, in the 71st year of his age.

I have already hinted at his domestic happiness. Nothing was wanting to render it perfect while he lived; and at his death, he had the satisfaction to leave, in prosperous circumstances, a numerous family, united to each other, and to their excellent mother, by the tenderest affection. His eldest son, an eminent lawyer at the Scottish bar, has been only prevented by the engagements of an active profession, from sustaining his father's literary name, while his two younger sons, both of whom very early embraced a military life, have carried his vigour and enterprise into a different career of ambition.[1] His eldest daughter is married to Mr. Brydone, the well-known author of one of our most elegant and popular books of travels. Another is the widow of the late John Russell, Esq., Clerk to the Signet, and one of the members of this Society.

The general view which has been already given of Dr. Robertson's occupations and habits, supersedes the necessity of attempting a formal delineation of his character. To the particulars, however, which have been incidentally mentioned, in the course of this biographical sketch, it may not be unimportant to add, that the same sagacity and good sense which so eminently distinguished him as a writer, guided his conduct in life, and rendered his counsels of inestimable value to his friends. He was not forward in offering advice; but when consulted, as he was very frequently, by his younger acquaintance, he entered into their concerns with the most lively interest, and seemed to have a pleasure and a pride in imparting to them all the lights of his experience and wisdom. Good sense was indeed the most prominent feature in his intellectual character; and it is unquestionably, of all the qualities of the understanding, that which essentially constitutes superiority of mind; for, although we are sometimes apt to appropriate the

[1] See Note P.

appellation of genius to certain peculiarities in the intellectual habits, it is he only who distinguishes himself from the rest of mankind, by thinking better than they on the same subjects, who fairly brings his powers into comparison with others. This was, in a remarkable degree, the case with Dr. Robertson. He was not eminent for metaphysical acuteness, nor did he easily enter into speculations involving mathematical or mechanical ideas; but in those endowments which lay the foundation of successful conduct, and which fit a man to acquire an influence over others, he had no superior. Among those who have, like him, devoted the greater part of life to study, perhaps it would be difficult to find his equal.

His practical acquaintance with human nature was great, and he possessed the soundest and most accurate notions of the characters of those with whom he was accustomed to associate. In that quick penetration, indeed, which reads the soul, and estimates the talents of others by a sort of intuition, he was surpassed by many; and I have often known him misled by first impressions: but where he had an opportunity of continuing his observations for a length of time, he seldom failed in forming conclusions equally just, refined, and profound. In a general knowledge of the world, and of the ways of men, his superiority was striking and indisputable; still more so, in my opinion, than in the judgments he formed of individuals. Nor is this surprising, when we consider the joint influence of his habits as an historian, and as a political leader.

Too much cannot be said of his moral qualities. Exemplary and amiable in the offices of private life, he exhibited in his public conduct, a rare union of political firmness with candour and moderation.—"He enjoyed," says Dr. Erskine, "the bounties of Providence without running into riot; was temperate without austerity; condescending and affable without meanness; and in expense neither sordid nor prodigal. He could feel an injury, and yet bridle his passion; was grave, not sullen; steady, not obstinate; friendly, not officious; prudent and cautious, not timid."—The praise is liberal, and it is expressed with the cordial warmth of friendship; but it

comes from one who had the best opportunity of knowing the truth, as he had enjoyed Dr. Robertson's intimacy from his childhood, and was afterwards, for more than twenty years, his colleague in the same church; while his zealous attachment to another system of ecclesiastical government, though it never impaired his affection for the companion of his youth, exempts him from any suspicion of undue partiality.

In point of stature Dr. Robertson was rather above the middle size; and his form, though it did not convey the idea of much activity, announced vigour of body and a healthful constitution. His features were regular and manly; and his eye spoke at once good sense and good humour. He appeared to greatest advantage in his complete clerical dress; and was more remarkable for gravity and dignity in discharging the functions of his public stations, than for ease or grace in private society. His portrait by Reynolds, painted about twenty years ago, is an admirable likeness; and fortunately, (for the colours are already much faded,) all its spirit is preserved in an excellent mezzotinto. At the request of his colleagues in the University,[1] who were anxious to have some memorial of him placed in the public library, he sat again, a few months before his death, to Mr. Raeburn, at a time when his altered and sickly aspect rendered the task of the artist peculiarly difficult. The picture, however, is not only worthy, in every respect, of Mr. Raeburn's high and deserved reputation, but to those who were accustomed to see Dr. Robertson at this interesting period, derives an additional value from an air of languor and feebleness, which strongly marked his appearance during his long decline.

I should feel myself happy if, in concluding this Memoir, I could indulge the hope, that it may be the means of completing and finishing that picture which his writings exhibit of his mind. In attempting to delineate its characteristic features, I have certainly possessed one advantage,—that I had long an opportunity of knowing and studying the original; and that my portrait, such as it is, is correctly copied from my own impressions. I am sensible, at the same time, that much more

[1] See Note Q.

might have been accomplished by a writer whose pursuits were more congenial than mine to Dr. Robertson's: nor would anything have induced me to depart, so far as I have now done, from the ordinary course of my own studies, but my respect for the last wish of a much lamented friend, expressed at a moment when nothing remained for me but silent acquiescence.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

NOTE A, p. 110.

THE information contained in the following Note (for which I am indebted to the friendship of Dr. Carlyle) cannot fail to be acceptable to those to whom the Literary History of Scotland is an object of curiosity.

"The *Select Society* owed its rise to the ingenious Allan Ramsay, (son of the poet of that name,) and was intended for Philosophical Inquiry, and the improvement of the Members in the Art of Speaking. They met for the first time in the Advocates' Library, in May 1754, and consisted only of fifteen, who had been nominated and called together by Mr. Ramsay and two or three of his friends. At that meeting they formed themselves into a society, into which the Members were ever after elected by ballot, and who met regularly every Friday evening, during the sittings of the Court of Session, both in summer and winter.

"This Society continued to flourish for several years, and became so fashionable, that in 1759 their number amounted to more than 130, which included all the *literati* of Edinburgh and its neighbourhood, and many of the nobility and gentry, who, though a few of them only took any share in the debates, thought themselves so well entertained and instructed, that they gave punctual attendance. In this Society, which remained in vigour for six or seven years, Dr. Robertson made a conspicuous figure. By his means it was, and by the appearances made by a few of his brethren, that a new lustre was thrown on their order. From the Revolution (when the Church had been chiefly filled with incumbents that were ill-educated) down to this period, the clergy of the Established Church had always been considered in a subordinate light, and as far inferior to the members of the other learned professions in knowledge and liberal views. But now, when compared together on this theatre for the exhibition of talents, they were found to be entitled to at least an equal share of praise; and having been long depressed, they were, in compensation as usual, raised full as high as they deserved. When the Select Society commenced, it was not foreseen that the *History of Scotland during the Reign of Mary*, the *Tragedy of Douglas*, and the *Epigoniad*, were to issue so soon from three gentlemen of the ecclesiastical order.

"When the Society was on the decline, by the avocations of many of its most distinguished members, and the natural abatement of that ardour which is excited by novelty and emulation, it was thought proper to elect fixed presidents to preside in their turns, whose duty it was to open the question to be debated upon, that a fair field might be laid before the speakers. It was observed of Dr. Robertson, who was one of those presidents, that whereas most of the others in their previous discourses exhausted the subject so much, that there was no room for debate, he gave only such brief, but artful sketches, as served to suggest ideas, without leading to a decision.

"Among the most distinguished speakers in the Select Society were Sir Gilbert Elliot, Mr. Wedderburn, Mr. Andrew Pringle, Lord Kames, Mr. Walter Stewart, Lord Elibank, and Dr. Robertson. The Right Honourable Charles Townshend spoke once. David Hume and Adam Smith never opened their lips.

"The Society was also much obliged to Dr. Alexander Monro, senior, Sir Alexander Dick, and Mr. Patrick Murray, Advocate, who, by their constant attendance and readiness on every subject, supported the debate during the first year of the establishment, when otherwise it would have gone heavily on. The same part was afterwards more ably performed by Lord Monboddo, Lord Elibank, and the Reverend William Wilkie, all of whom had the peculiar talent of supporting their paradoxical tenets by an inexhaustible fund of humour and argument."

[It appears from the minutes[1] of the Select Society, that although Mr. Hume and Mr. Smith took no active part in the literary discussions which came before it, both of them filled the chair as presidents, upon different occasions. On the 19th of June 1754, (the second meeting[2] of the Society after its institution,) the minutes bear that, "Mr. Adam Smith, Presos, did name the following questions to be the subject of debate on the Wednesday following, viz.:—

"1. Whether a general Naturalization of foreign Protestants would be advantageous to Britain?

"2. Whether bounties on the exportation of corn be advantageous to trade and manufactures, as well as to agriculture?"

The following short minute, when considered in connexion with some of Mr. Hume's subsequent publications, is also an object of curiosity.

"*Edinburgh, 4th December* 1754.

"Mr. David Hume, *Preses.*

"The Society entered upon the debate of the question appointed for this night, viz.:—

"Whether ought we to prefer ancient or modern manners with regard to the condition and treatment of women? And after some reasoning and speeches on that subject, the question named by the President, and allowed by the Society, for the subject of the ensuing night's debate, was—

[1] Now in the possession of Mr. William Gib, (Under-Librarian to the Faculty of Advocates,) to whose obliging attention in this communication, as well as on many other occasions, I have been much indebted.

[2] Mr Alexander Wedderburn was in the chair at the first meeting, when little seems to have been done, but the appointment of Walter Goodall (the vindicator of Queen Mary) as Clerk to the Society.

"Whether the difference of national characters be chiefly owing to the nature of different climates, or to moral and political causes?

"Then the President left the chair.

"DAVID HUME."

To these extracts I shall only add a few sentences from the minutes of August 7, 1754, as a specimen of the subjects which then entered into the discussions of the first literary circle in Edinburgh. Some of them towards the end of the list, (independently of the interest they derive from various names which were soon afterwards to become so illustrious,) are not without their value, as documents of the changes which have since taken place in the state of national manners, and in the common topics of argument among speculative men.

"Mr. PATRICK MURRAY, *Preses.*

"Sir David Dalrymple, Chairman of the Committee for Questions, read to the Society several questions received by the Committee, which were all read and approved of, and ordered to be entered in the book of questions.

"The questions received were as follows:—

"Whether the number of banks now in Scotland be useful to the trade of that country? And whether paper credit be advantageous to a nation?

"Whether the bounty should be continued on the exportation of low-priced linens made in Scotland?

"Whether the common practice in Scotland of distributing money to the poor in their own houses, or the receiving the poor into workhouses and hospitals, be most advantageous?

"Whether, in the present circumstances of this country, it be most advantageous to increase tillage or grass?

"Whether Brutus did well in killing Cæsar?

* * * * * * * *

"Whether the repenting-stool ought to be taken away?

"The Committee having refused the following question—Whether the law of Queen Joan of Naples, allowing licensed stews, would be advantageous to a nation? Mr. Wedderburn, who proposed it, appealed to the Society, and the determination of the appeal was delayed till next Session."

A printed list of the Members having been accidentally preserved by Dr. Carlyle, I need make no apology for giving it a place in this Appendix, as a memorial of the state of Literary Society in Edinburgh forty years ago.

List of the Members of the Select Society, 17th October, 1759.

Rev. J. Jardine, Minister in Edinburgh.
Francis Home, M.D.
Adam Smith, Professor of Ethics at Glasgow.
Alexander Wedderburn, (afterwards Lord Chancellor.)
Allan Ramsay, (afterwards Painter to his Majesty.)
James Burnet, Advocate, (afterwards Lord Monboddo.)
John Campbell, Advocate, (afterwards Lord Stonefield.)

Rev. Alexander Carlyle, Minister at Inveresk.
William Johnston, Advocate, (afterwards Sir William Pulteney.)
James Stevenson Rogers, Advocate.
David Hume.
John Swinton, Advocate, (afterwards Lord Swinton.)
Patrick Murray, Advocate.
Patrick Hume of Billy, Advocate.
Alexander Stevenson, M.D.
Walter Stewart, Advocate.
John Home, (Author of Douglas.)
Robert Alexander, Merchant.
James Russell, (afterwards Professor of Natural Philosophy.)
George Cockburn, Advocate.
David Clerk, M.D.
George Brown, (Lord Coalston.)
Rev. William Robertson, Minister in Edinburgh.
John Fletcher, (General Fletcher Campbell.)
Alexander Agnew, Advocate.
John Hope, M.D.
Sir David Dalrymple, Advocate, (afterwards Lord Hailes.)
Gilbert Elliot, one of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.
Sir Harry Erskine, Bart.
Rev. Hugh Blair, one of the Ministers of Edinburgh.
Andrew Stuart, (afterwards M.P. for Weymouth.)
Charles Fysch Palmer.
George Morrison, Advocate.
Andrew Pringle, (Lord Aylemoor.)
Alexander Monro, Sen., M.D.
David Ross, Advocate, (afterwards Lord Ankerville.)
Right Hon. Patrick Lord Elibank.
Earl of Glasgow.
Sir Alexander Dick, Bart.
Robert Arbuthnot, (afterwards Secretary to the Board of Trustees for Manufactures, &c.)
Adam Fairholme, Merchant in Edinburgh.
Major James Edmonstone.
Charles Hamilton Gordon, Advocate.
James Fergusson of Pitfour, Jun., Advocate.
David Kennedy, Advocate, (afterwards Earl of Cassillis.)
John Dalrymple, Advocate, (afterwards Baron of Exchequer.)
Major Robert Murray, (afterwards Sir Robert Murray.)
Rev. Robert Wallace, Minister in Edinburgh.
John Gordon, Advocate.
Alexander Maxwell, Merchant in Edinburgh.
John Coutts, Merchant in Edinburgh.
William Tod, Merchant in Edinburgh.
Thomas Millar, (afterwards President of the Court of Session.)
Robert Chalmers.
Mr. Baron Grant.
Captain James Stewart.
Sir John Stewart, Advocate.
James Guthrie, Merchant.
Charles Congalton, Surgeon in Edinburgh.
Rev. William Wilkie, Minister at Ratho.
John Monro, Advocate.
Captain Robert Douglas.
Alexander Tait, Writer in Edinburgh.
George Chalmers, Merchant in Edinburgh.
Colonel Oughton, (afterwards Sir Adolphus Oughton.)
John Adam, Architect.
Robert White, M.D.
Henry Home, (Lord Kames.)
James Montgomery, Advocate, (afterwards Chief Baron of Exchequer.)
David Dalrymple, Advocate, (afterwards Lord Westall.)
Rev. George Kay, Minister in Edinburgh.
George Muir, Clerk of Justiciary.
George Clerk, (afterwards Sir George Clerk.)
Lieut.-Col. Archibald Montgomery, (afterwards Earl of Eglinton.)
Right Honourable Lord Deskfoord.
Robert Berry, Advocate.
Adam Austin, M.D.
Lieut.-Col. Morgan.

George Drummond, (Lord Provost of Edinburgh.)
The Earl of Lauderdale.
Alexander Boswell, (Lord Auchinleck.)
Alexander Udney, Commissioner of Excise.
Rev. George Wishart, Minister in Edinburgh.
Right Honourable Lord Belhaven.
Francis Garden, Advocate, (afterwards Lord Gardenstone.)
David Rae, Advocate, (afterwards Lord Justice Clerk.)
Mansfield Cardonnel, Commissioner of Excise.
Right Honourable Lord Aberdour.
John Murray of Philiphaugh, Advocate.
William Tytler, Writer to the Signet, (Author of the *Vindication of Queen Mary.*)
Colin Drummond, M.D.
Robert Dundas, (afterwards President of the Court of Session.)
Stamp Brooksbanks.
William Nairne, Advocate, (afterwards Lord Dunsinnan.)
James Adam, Architect.
Captain Charles Erskine.
Hugh Dalrymple, Advocate, (Author of *Rodondo.*)
James Hay, Surgeon.
Mr. Baron Erskine, (afterwards Lord Alva.)
John Clerk, (Author of *Naval Tactics.*)
John M'Gowan, Jun., Writer in Edinburgh.
Earl of Galloway.
John Graham of Dougaldston.
James Carmichael, Writer to the Signet.
Adam Ferguson, (afterwards Professor of Moral Philosophy.)
George Drummond of Blair.
William Cullen, M.D.
Ilay Campbell, Advocate, afterwards President of the Court of Session.)
Alexander Murray, Advocate, (afterwards Lord Henderland.)
Rev. Robert Dick.
Right Honourable Lord Gray.
Earl of Errol.
James Dewar, Advocate.
Captain David Wedderburn.
Major James Dalrymple.
Archibald Hamilton, M.D.
Andrew Cheap.
Andrew Crosbie, Advocate.
Earl of Aboyne.
Adam Fergusson, Advocate, (afterwards Sir Adam Fergusson.)
Earl of Selkirk.
John Turton.
Cosmo Gordon, (afterwards one of the Barons of Exchequer.)
Right Honourable Lord Gairlies.
Earl of Sutherland.
Captain Dougald Campbell.
Honourable George Ramsay, Advocate.
Earl of Rosebery.
Earl of Cassillis, Advocate.
William Graham, Advocate.
John Pringle of Crichton.
Right Honourable Charles Townshend.
George Wallace.

NOTE B, p. 115.

FROM WILLIAM STRAHAN, ESQ., TO DR. ROBERTSON.

LONDON, *Feb.* 28, 1759.

REV. SIR,—When I received your farewell letter on the conclusion of your History, I was determined not to answer it till I could tell you, with certainty, and from my own personal knowledge, what reception it met with in this place. And what I am going to tell you, I daresay you have had from many of your friends long ago. No matter for that. Every man, and especially one in my way, has an opportunity to hear the public sentiments through many different channels. I have now waited

till I could be fully informed; and as I have been particularly solicitous to procure authentic intelligence, you will not be displeased at my confirming what you have heard before, as we love to see a piece of good news in the *Gazette*, (excuse the vanity of the comparison,) even though we have read it a month before in all the other papers. I don't remember to have heard any book so universally approved by the best judges, for what are sold yet, have been only to such. The people in the country know nothing of it, unless from the advertisements; and a *History of Scotland* is no very enticing title. But many of the first distinction in town have perused it with great satisfaction. They wonder how a Scotch parson, and who had never been out of Scotland, could be able to write in so correct, so clear, so manly, and so nervous a style. The Speaker of the House of Commons, in particular, prefers the style to that of Bolingbroke, and everybody that I have either seen or heard of, thinks it one of the very best performances that has been exhibited for many years. As these are not superficial judges, you may be assured that the fame you have acquired will be permanent, and not only permanent, but extending daily. Next week you will see some extracts from it in the *Chronicle*, which will serve to give the people at a distance from town some idea of its excellence; but without that, or anything else, the report of those who have read it in London, will soon spread its reputation; for the capital always gives the lead in this way as well as in most other cases. The impression, therefore, certainly will be gone before another can be got ready. Mr. Millar has wrote to you already about revising it for another edition, and I think the sooner you send up some of the sheets the better, that no time may be lost. Does not this answer your most sanguine expectations? For indeed a more favourable reception could not be hoped for. I most sincerely wish you joy of your success, and have not the least doubt but it will have all the good effects upon your future fortunes which you could possibly hope for, or expect. Much depended upon the first performance; that trial is now happily over, and henceforth you will sail with a favourable gale. In truth, to acquire such a flood of reputation from writing on a subject in itself so unpopular in this country, is neither a common, nor a contemptible conquest. I will not trouble you more on a subject of which you must needs have heard a great deal from hence lately. I rejoice in your good fortune, and am with much esteem and sincerity, Dear Sir, your most obedient servant,

WILL. STRAHAN.

The following letter from Mr. Strahan's son, forms an interesting counterpart to the foregoing article:—

FROM ANDREW STRAHAN, ESQ., TO DR. ROBERTSON.

LONDON, 19*th November* 1792.

DEAR SIR,—Being at the sea-side, in Sussex, when I received your favour of the 26th ult., I have had no opportunity till now of acknowledging it, and, at the same time, informing myself of the state of the edition, so as to answer your question.

Mr. Cadell (who is now with me, and who desires to be affectionately remembered) is of opinion with me, that we should take the ensuing season of ships sailing to India to reduce the quartos. But we will print an edition in octavo, next

summer, whatever may then be the state of the former, and we will thank you for a correct copy at your leisure.

The fourteenth edition of your "*Scotland*" will be published in the course of the winter, during which it is our intention to advertise all your works strongly in all the papers. And we have the satisfaction of informing you, that if we may judge by the sale of your writings, your literary reputation is daily increasing.—I am, with much esteem, &c.

NOTE C, p. 119.

The praise contained in the following letter, (though less profusely bestowed than by some other of Dr. Robertson's correspondents,) will not appear of small value to those who are acquainted with the character of the writer, and with his accurate researches into the antiquities of Scotland.

FROM SIR DAVID DALRYMPLE [LORD HAILES] TO DR. ROBERTSON.

EDINBURGH, 20*th Feb.* 1776.

DEAR SIR,—I am very happy in your favourable acceptance of the *Annals of Scotland*. Even your opinion is not enough to make me think of going beyond the Restoration of James I. Your sketch of the history from that time to the death of James V. is of itself sufficient to deter me. It is very possible that in your delineation of the history of the five Jameses, there may be errors and omissions, but you have drawn all the characters with such historical truth, that if I were to work on the same ground, I might spoil and overcharge the canvas; at the same time, the reader would not see himself in a strange country,—every object would be familiar to him. There is another reason, and that is a political one, for my stopping short. Many readers might take it for granted that I would write disfavourably of the Stewarts, from prejudice of education or family. Other readers might suspect my impartiality, and thus there would be little prospect of my being favourably heard. If I have health to finish my plan, I propose to go back into the Laws of Scotland. *That* is a work of which I must not lose sight, after I have laboured so long upon it.[1]

I send you a book which I have republished, and beg your acceptance of it.—I am, Dear Sir, your most obedient and obliged humble servant,

DAV. DALRYMPLE.

The following letters, which have been kindly communicated to me by a friend of Lord Hailes, ascertain some important dates with respect to the progress of Dr. Robertson's studies:—

DR. ROBERTSON TO [SIR DAVID DALRYMPLE, *afterwards*] LORD HAILES.

GLADSMUIR, 22*d Oct.* 1753.

SIR,—I intend to employ some of the idle time of this winter in making a more diligent inquiry than ever I have done into that period of Scots History from

[1] It is much to be regretted that the work here alluded to by Lord Hailes was never carried into complete execution. The fragments, however, of such a writer, relative to a subject on which he had so long bestowed attention, could not fail to be of great value; and it is to be hoped that they will one day be communicated to the public.

the death of King James V. to the death of Queen Mary. I have the more common histories of that time, such as Buchanan, Spottiswoode, and Knox; but there are several collections of papers by Anderson, Jebb, Forbes, and others, which I know not how to come at. I am persuaded you have most of these books in your library, and I flatter myself you will be so good as to allow me the use of them. You know better what books to send me, and what will be necessary to give any light to this part of history, than I do what to ask, and therefore I leave the particular books to your own choice, which you'll please order to be given to my servant. Whatever you send me shall be used with much care, and returned with great punctuality. I beg you may forgive this trouble.—I am, with great respect, &c.

DR. ROBERTSON TO [SIR DAVID DALRYMPLE, *afterwards*] LORD HAILES.

GLADSMUIR, 26*th July* 1757.

SIR,—I have now got forward to the year 1660, and as it will be impossible for me to steer through Gowrie's conspiracy without your guidance, I must take advantage of the friendly offer you was pleased to make me, and apply to you for such books and papers as you think to be necessary for my purpose. I would wish to give an accurate and rational account of the matter, but not very minute. I have in my possession Calderwood's MSS., and all the common printed histories; but I have neither Lord Cromarty's account, nor any other piece particularly relative to the conspiracy. I beg you may supply me with as many as you can, and direct me to anything you think may be useful. The papers you are pleased to communicate to me shall be shewn to no human creature, and no farther use shall be made of them than you permit. My servant will take great care of whatever books or papers you give him. I need not say how sensible I am of the good will with which you are pleased to instruct me in this curious point of history, nor how much I expect to profit by it.—I ever am, &c.

DR. ROBERTSON TO [SIR DAVID DALRYMPLE, *afterwards*] LORD HAILES.

EDINBURGH, 8*th November* 1758.

SIR,—I have taken the liberty to send you inclosed a Preface to my book, which I have just now written. I find it very difficult for a man to speak of himself with any decency through three or four pages. Unluckily I have been obliged to write it in the utmost hurry, as Strahan is clamouring for it. I think it was necessary to say all in it that I have said, and yet it looks too like a puff. I send it to you, not only that you may do me the favour to correct any inaccuracies in the composition, but because there is a paragraph in it which I would not presume to publish without your permission, though I have taken care to word it so modestly that a man might have said it of himself. As I must send off the Preface by to-morrow's post, I must beg the favour that you would return it with your remarks to-morrow morning. I would wish, if possible, that I had time to show it to Blair.—I am, with great respect, &c.

The letters which follow, (although written many years afterwards,) may,

without impropriety, be introduced here, as they all relate more or less to the *History of Scotland.*

DR. ROBERTSON TO LORD HAILES.

COLLEGE, *Feb.* 10, 1776.

MY LORD,—I hope your Lordship will forgive me for having deferred so long to return you my best thanks for the very acceptable present which you were pleased to send me. Previous to doing this, I wished to have the satisfaction of perusing the *Annals* again, and the opinion I had formed of their merit, is in no degree diminished by an attentive review of them in their present dress.

You have given authenticity and order to a period of our History which has hitherto been destitute of both, and a Scotchman has now the pleasure of being able to pronounce what is true, and what is fabulous in the early part of our national story. As I have no doubt with respect to the reception which this part of the *Annals*, though perhaps the least interesting, will meet with, I flatter myself that your Lordship will go on with the work. Allow me, on the public account, to hope that you have not fixed *the Accession of James I.* as an impassable boundary beyond which you are not to advance. It is at that period the more interesting age of our history commences. From thence the regular series of our laws begins. During the reign of the Jameses, many things still require the investigation of such an accurate and patient inquirer as your Lordship. I hope that what I have done in my review of that period, will be no restraint on your Lordship in entering upon that field. My view of it was a general one that did not require the minute accuracy of a chronological research, and if you discover either omissions or mistakes in it, (and I daresay you will discover both,) I have no objection to your supplying the one, and correcting the other. Your strictures on me will not be made with a hostile hand, and I had much rather that these were made than be deprived of the advantage that I shall reap from your completing your work. As far as I can judge by the opinion of those with whom I converse, the public wish is, that you should continue your *Annals* at least to the death of James V. I most heartily join my voice to this general desire, and wish you health to go on with what will be so much for the honour of your country.—I am, with great truth and respect, my Lord, your Lordship's most obedient and most humble servant.

DR. ROBERTSON TO LORD HAILES.

COLLEGE, *March* 13, 1776.

MY LORD,—When I took the liberty of applying to your Lordship last week, I unluckily did not advert to the hurry of business during the last week of the Session. In compliance with your request, I shall, without preamble or apology, mention what induced me to trouble your Lordship.

I am now in the twenty-eighth year of my authorship, and the proprietors of the *History of Scotland* purpose to end the second fourteen years of their copyright splendidly, by publishing two new editions of that book, one in quarto, and another in octavo. This has induced me to make a general review of the whole work, and to avail myself both of the remarks of my friends, and the strictures of those who differ from me in opinion. I mean not to take the field as a controversial writer,

or to state myself in opposition to any antagonist. Wherever I am satisfied that I have fallen into errors, I shall quietly, and without reluctance, correct it. Wherever I think my sentiments right and well established, they shall stand.—In some few places, I shall illustrate what I have written, by materials and facts which I have discovered since the first publication of my book. These additions will not, I hope, be very bulky, but they will contribute, as I imagine, to throw light on several events which have been mistaken, or misrepresented. I shall take care, on account of the purchasers of former editions, that all the additions and alterations of any importance, shall be published separately, both in quarto and octavo.

As I know how thoroughly your Lordship is acquainted with every transaction in Queen Mary's reign, and with how much accuracy you are accustomed to examine historical facts, it was my intention to have requested of you, that if any error or omission in my book had occurred to you in the perusal of it, you would be so obliging as to communicate your sentiments to me. I shall certainly receive such communications with much attention and gratitude.—You have set me right with respect to the Act 19th April 1567, but I think that I can satisfy your Lordship that it was esteemed in that age, and was really a concession of greater importance to the reformed than you seem to apprehend. I beg leave to desire that, if you have any remarks to communicate, they may be sent soon, as the booksellers are impatient. I trust your Lordship will pardon the liberty I have taken.—I have the honour to be, my Lord, your most obedient and most humble servant.

DR. ROBERTSON TO LORD HAILES.

COLLEGE OF EDINBURGH, *March* 20, 1786.

MY LORD,—I consider it as an unfortunate accident for me, that your Lordship happened to be so much pre-occupied at the time when I took the liberty of applying to you. I return you thanks for the communication of your Notes on the Acts of Parliament. Besides the entertainment and instruction I received from the perusal of them, I found some things of use to me, and I have availed myself of the permission you was pleased to give me.

I mentioned to your Lordship that I differed a little from you about the effect of the Act April 19, 1567. I inclose a copy both of the *text* corrected, as I intend to publish it in the new edition, and of a note which I shall add to explain my idea of the import of the Act. I request of your Lordship to peruse it, and if in any part it meets not with your approbation, be so good as to let me know. Please to return it as soon as you can, that I may communicate it, and any other additions and alterations, to Mr. Davidson, who has promised to revise them.

In 1776, your Lordship published the *Secret Correspondence of Sir R. Cecil with James VI.* I have not a copy of it, and have been unsuccessful in my application for one to some of my friends. If you have a copy, and will be so good as to allow me the use of it, I shall return it with the greatest care, as I do herewith the notes I received from your Lordship. I have attended to the Notes in Bannatyne's *Poems*. I have the Hamilton MSS. in three volumes folio. They are curious.—I have the honour to be, with great respect, my Lord, your Lordship's obedient and obliged humble servant.

I shall subjoin some extracts from Mr. Hume's letters to Dr. Robertson, written

about this period, and a few other passages from different correspondents. They seem to me worthy of preservation, although the extraneous matter they contain rendered it impossible for me to incorporate them with my narrative.

MR. HUME TO DR. ROBERTSON.

LONDON, LISLE STREET, *18th Nov.* 1758.

MY DEAR SIR,—According to your permission, I have always got your corrected sheets from Strahan; and am glad to find, that we shall agree in almost all the material parts of our history. Your resolution to assert the authenticity of Mary's letter to Bothwell, with the consequence which must necessarily follow, removes the chief point in which, I apprehend, we should differ. There remain, however, two other points where I have not the good fortune to agree with you, viz.:—the violation of the Treaty of Perth by Mary of Guise, and the innocency of Mary with regard to Babington's conspiracy; but as I had wrote notes upon these passages, the public must judge between us. Only allow me to say, that even if you be in the right with regard to the last, (of which, notwithstanding my deference to your authority, I cannot perceive the least appearance,) you are certainly too short and abrupt in handling it. I believe you go contrary to received opinion; and the point was of consequence enough to merit a note or a dissertation.

There is still another point in which we differ, and which reduced me to great perplexity. You told me that all historians had been mistaken with regard to James's behaviour on his mother's trial and execution, that he was not really the pious son he pretended to be, that the appearances which deceived the world, were put on at the solicitation of the French ambassador, Courcelles, and that I should find all this proved by a manuscript of Dr. Campbell's. I accordingly spoke of the matter to Dr. Campbell, who confirmed what you said, with many additions and amplifications. I desired to have the manuscript, which he sent me. But great was my surprise, when I found the contrary in every page, many praises bestowed on the King's piety both by Courcelles and the French Court; his real grief and resentment painted in the strongest colours; resolutions even taken by him to form an alliance with Philip of Spain, in order to get revenge; repeated advices given him by Courcelles and the French ministers, rather to conceal his resentment, till a proper opportunity offered of taking vengeance. What most displeased me in this affair was, that as I thought myself obliged to follow the ordinary tenor of the printed historian, while you appealed to manuscript, it would be necessary for me to appeal to the same manuscripts, to give extracts of them, and to oppose your conclusions. Though I know that I could execute this matter in a friendly and obliging manner for you, yet I own that I was very uneasy at finding myself under a necessity of observing anything which might appear a mistake in your narration. But there came to me a man this morning, who, as I fancied, gave me the key of the difficulty, but without freeing me from my perplexity. This was a man commonly employed by Millar and Strahan to decipher manuscripts. He brought me a letter of yours to Strahan, where you desired him to apply to me in order to point out the passages proper to be inserted in your Appendix, and proper to prove the assertion of your text. You add there, these letters are in the French language. I immediately concluded that you had not read the manuscripts, but had taken it on Dr. Campbell's word: for the letters are in English, translated by I know not

whom from the French. I could do nothing on this occasion but desire Strahan to stop the press in printing the Appendix, and stay till I wrote to you. If I could persuade you to change the narration of the text, that sheet could be easily cancelled, and an Appendix formed proper to confirm an opposite account. If you still persist in your opinion, somebody else whom you trusted, might be employed to find the proper passages; for I cannot find them.

There is only one passage which looks like your opinion, and which I shall transcribe to you. It is a relation of what passed between James and Courcelles upon the first rumour of the discovery of Babington's conspiracy before James apprehended his mother to be in any danger. "The King said he loved his mother as much as nature and duty bound him; but he could not love her. :* For he knew well she bore him no more good will than she did to the Queen of England: That he had seen with his own eyes before Foulnaye's departure out of Scotland a letter to him, whereby she sent him word, that if he would not conform himself to her will, and follow her counsels and advice, that he should content himself with the Lordship of Darnley, which was all that appertained unto him by his father: Farther, that he had seen other letters under her own hand, confirming her evil towards him: Besides, that she had oftentimes gone about to make a regency in Scotland, and to put him besides the Crown; that it behoved him to think of his own affairs, and that he thought the Queen of England would attempt nothing against her person without making him acquainted: That his mother was henceforward to carry herself both towards him and the Queen of England after another sort, without bending any more upon such practices and intelligences as she had in former times: That he hoped to set such persons about her as"—(Here the manuscript is not farther legible.) But though such were James's sentiments before he apprehended his mother to be in danger, he adopted a directly opposite conduct afterwards, as I told you. I can only express my wishes that you may see reason to conform you narrative in Vol. II. pp. 139, 140, to this account, or omit that Appendix altogether, or find some other person who can better execute your intentions than it is possible for me to do.

Mr. Hume to Dr. Robertson.

25th January 1759.

My dear Sir,—What I wrote you with regard to Mary's concurrence in the conspiracy against Queen Elizabeth, was from the printed histories of papers; and nothing ever appeared to me more evident. Your chief objection, I see, is derived from one circumstance, that neither the secretaries nor conspirators were confronted with Mary; but you must consider that the law did not then require this confrontation, and it was in no case the practice. The Crown could not well grant it in one case without granting it in all, because the refusing of it would then have been a strong presumption of innocence in the prisoner. Yet as Mary's was an extraordinary case, Elizabeth was willing to have granted it. I find in Forbes's MS. papers, sent me by Lord Royston, a letter of hers to Burleigh and Walsingham, wherein she tells them, that if they thought proper, they might carry down the two secretaries to Fotheringay, in order to confront them with her. But they reply, that they think it needless.

* [*Sic.*]

But I am now sorry to tell you, that by Murden's *State Papers*, which are printed, the matter is put beyond all question. I got these papers during the holidays, by Dr. Birch's means; and as soon as I had read them, I ran to Mr. Millar, and desired him very earnestly to stop the publication of your *History* till I should write to you, and give you an opportunity of correcting a mistake of so great moment; but he absolutely refused compliance. He said that your book was now finished, that the copies would be shipped for Scotland in two days, that the whole narration of Mary's trial must be wrote over again; that this would require time, and it was uncertain whether the new narrative could be brought within the same compass with the old; that this change he said would require the cancelling a great many sheets; that there were scattered passages through the volumes founded on your theory, and these must also be all cancelled, and that this change required the new printing of a great part of the edition. For these reasons, which do not want force, he refused, after deliberation, to stop his publication, and I was obliged to acquiesce. Your best apology at present is, that you could not possibly see the grounds of Mary's guilt, and every equitable person will excuse you.

I am sorry, on many accounts, that you did not see this collection of Murden's. Among other curiosities, there are several instructions to H. Killigrew, dated 10th September 1572. He was then sent into Scotland. It there appears that the Regents, Murray and Lennox, had desired Mary to be put into their hands, in order to try her and put her to death. Elizabeth there offers to Regent Mar to deliver her up, provided good security were given, "that she should receive that she hath deserved there by order of justice, whereby no further peril should ensue by her escaping, or by setting her up again." It is probable Mar refused compliance, for no steps were taken towards it.

I am nearly printed out, and shall be sure to send you a copy by the stage coach, or some other conveyance. I beg of you to make remarks as you go along. It would have been much better had we communicated before printing, which was always my desire, and was most suitable to the friendship which always did, and I hope always will, subsist between us. I speak this chiefly on my own account. For though I had the perusal of your sheets before I printed, I was not able to derive sufficient benefits from them, or indeed to make any alteration by their assistance. There still remain, I fear, many errors, of which you could have convinced me, if we had canvassed the matter in conversation. Perhaps I might also have been sometimes no less fortunate with you. Particularly I could almost undertake to convince you, that the Earl of Murray's conduct with the Duke of Norfolk was no way dishonourable.

I have seen a copy of your History with Charles Stanhope. Lord Willoughby, who had been there reading some passages of it, said that you was certainly mistaken with regard to the Act passed in the last Parliament of Mary, settling the Reformation. He said that the Act of Parliament, the first of James, was no proof of it; for though that statute contains a statute where the Queen's name was employed, yet that is always the case with the bills brought into Parliament, even though they receive not the Royal Assent, nor perhaps pass the Houses. I wish this be not the case, considering the testimony of Buchanan, Calderwood, and Spottiswoode. Besides, if the bill had before received the Royal Assent, what

necessity of repeating it, or passing it again? Mary's title was more undisputable than James's.

Dr. Blair tells me, that Prince Edward is reading you, and is charmed. I hear the same of the Princess and Prince of Wales. But what will really give you pleasure, I lent my copy to Elliot during the holidays, who thinks it one of the finest performances he ever read: and though he expected much, he finds more. He remarked, however, (which is also my opinion,) that in the beginning, before your pen was sufficiently accustomed to the historic style, you employ too many digressions and reflections. This was also somewhat my own case, which I have corrected in my new edition.

Millar was proposing to publish me about the middle of March, but I shall communicate to him your desire, even though I think it entirely groundless, as you will likewise think after you have read my volume. He has very needlessly delayed your publication till the first of February, at the desire of the Edinburgh booksellers, who could no way be affected by a publication in London. I was exceedingly sorry not to be able to comply with your desire, when you expressed your wish that I should not write this period. I could not write downward. For when you find occasion, by new discoveries, to correct your opinion with regard to facts which passed in Queen Elizabeth's days; who, that has not the best opportunities of informing himself, could venture to relate any recent transactions? I must therefore have abandoned altogether this scheme of the English History, in which I had proceeded so far, if I had not acted as I did. You will see what light and force this History of the Tudors bestows on that of the Stewarts. Had I been prudent I should have begun with it. I care not to boast, but I will venture to say, that I have now effectually stopped the mouths of all those villanous Whigs who railed at me.

You are so kind as to ask me about my coming down. I can yet answer nothing. I have the strangest reluctance to change places. I lived several years happy with my brother at Ninewells, and had not his marriage changed a little the state of the family, I believe I should have lived and died there. I used every expedient to evade this journey to London, yet it is now uncertain whether I shall ever leave it. I have had some invitations, and some intentions of taking a trip to Paris; but I believe it will be safer for me not to go thither, for I might probably settle there for life. No one was ever endowed with so great a portion of the *vis inertiæ*. But as I live here very privately, and avoid as much as possible (and it is easily possible) all connexions with the great, I believe I should be better at Edinburgh. . . .

MR. HUME TO DR. ROBERTSON.

LONDON, *8th Feb.* 1759.

. . . As to the *Age of Leo the Tenth*, it was Warton himself who intended to write it; but he has not wrote it, and probably never will. If I understand your hint, I should conjecture, that you had some thoughts of taking up the subject. But how can you acquire knowledge of the great works of Sculpture, Architecture, and Painting, by which that age was chiefly distinguished? Are you versed in all the anecdotes of the Italian Literature? These questions I heard proposed in a company of *literati* when I inquired concerning this design of Warton. They

applied their remarks to that gentleman, who yet, they say, has travelled. I wish they do not all of them fall more fully on you. However, you must not be idle. May I venture to suggest to you the Ancient History, particularly that of Greece. I think Rollin's success might encourage you, nor need you be in the least intimidated by his merit. That author has no other merit but a certain facility and sweetness of narration, but has loaded his work with fifty puerilities.

Our friend, Wedderburn, is advancing with great strides in his profession. . . .

I desire my compliments to Lord Elibank. I hope his Lordship has forgot his vow of answering us, and of washing Queen Mary white. I am afraid that is impossible; but his Lordship is very well qualified to gild her.—I am, &c.

MR. HUME TO DR. ROBERTSON.

* * * * * * * *

I forgot to tell you, that two days ago I was in the House of Commons, where an English gentleman came to me, and told me, that he had lately sent to a grocer's shop for a pound of raisins, which he received wrapt up in a paper that he shewed me. How would you have turned pale at the sight! It was a leaf of your *History*, and the very character of Queen Elizabeth, which you had laboured so finely, little thinking it would so soon come to so disgraceful an end.—I happened a little after to see Millar, and told him the story; consulting him, to be sure, on the fate of his new boasted historian, of whom he was so fond. But the story proves more serious than I apprehended. For he told Strahan, who thence suspects villany among his prentices and journeymen; and has sent me very earnestly to know the gentleman's name, that he may find out the grocer, and trace the matter to the bottom. In vain did I remonstrate that this was sooner or later the fate of all authors, *serius, ocyus, sors exitura*. He will not be satisfied; and begs me to keep my jokes for another occasion. But that I am resolved not to do; and therefore, being repulsed by his passion and seriousness, I direct them against you.

Next week, I am published; and then I expect a constant comparison will be made between Dr. Robertson and Mr. Hume. I shall tell you in a few weeks which of these heroes is likely to prevail. Meanwhile, I can inform both of them for their comforts, that their combat is not likely to make half so much noise as that between Broughton and the one-eyed coachman. *Vanitas vanitatum, omnia vanitas*. I shall still except, however, the friendship and good opinion of worthy men.—I am, &c.

MR. HUME TO DR. ROBERTSON.

LONDON, 12*th March* 1759.

MY DEAR SIR,—I believe I mentioned to you a French gentleman, Monsieur Helvetius, whose book, *De l'Esprit*, was making a great noise in Europe. He is a very fine genius, and has the character of a very worthy man. My name is mentioned several times in his work with marks of esteem; and he has made me an offer, if I would translate his work into English, to translate anew all my philosophical writings into French. He says that none of them are well done, except that on the *Natural History of Religion*, by Monsieur Matigny, a Councillor of State. He added, that the Abbé Prevot, celebrated for the *Mémoires d'un Homme d'Honneur*, and other entertaining books, was just now translating my *History*.

This account of Helvetius engaged me to send him over the new editions of all my writings; and I have added your *History*, which, I told him, was here published with great applause; adding, that the subject was interesting, and the execution masterly; and that it was probable some man of letters at Paris may think that a translation of it would be agreeable to the public. I thought that this was the best method of executing your intentions. I could not expect that any Frenchman here would be equal to the work. There is one Carracioli, who came to me and spoke of translating my new volume of *History;* but as he also mentioned his intentions of translating Smollet, I gave him no encouragement to proceed. The same reason would make me averse to see you in his hands.

But though I have given this character of your work to Monsieur Helvetius, I warn you that this is the last time, that either to Frenchman or Englishman, I shall ever speak the least good of it. A plague take you! Here I sat near the historical summit of Parnassus, immediately under Dr. Smollet; and you have the impudence to squeeze yourself by me, and place yourself directly under his feet. Do you imagine that this can be agreeable to me? And must not I be guilty of great simplicity to contribute by my endeavours to your thrusting me out of my place in Paris as well as at London? But I give you warning that you will find the matter somewhat difficult, at least in the former city. A friend of mine, who is there, writes home to his father, the strangest accounts on that head, which my modesty will not permit me to repeat, but which it allowed me very deliciously to swallow.

I have got a good reason or pretence for excusing me to Monsieur Helvetius with regard to the translating his work. A translation of it was previously advertised here.—I remain, &c.

MR. HUME TO DR. ROBERTSON.

LONDON, 29*th May* 1759.

MY DEAR SIR,—I had a letter from Helvetius lately, wrote before your book arrived at Paris. He tells me that the Abbé Prevot, who had just finished the translation of my History, *paroit très-disposé à traduire l'Histoire d'Ecosse que vient de faire Monsieur Robertson.* If he be engaged by my persuasion, I shall have the satisfaction of doing you a real credit and pleasure: for he is one of the best pens in Paris.

I looked with great impatience in your new edition for the note you seemed to intend with regard to the breach of the capitulation of Perth, and was much disappointed at missing it. I own that I am curious on that head. I cannot so much as imagine a colour upon which their accusations could possibly be founded. The articles were only two; indemnity to the inhabitants, and the exclusion of French soldiers—now that Scotch national troops were not Frenchmen and foreigners seems pretty apparent: and both Knox and the Manifesto of the Congregation acquit the Queen-Regent of any breach of the first article, as I had observed in my note to p. 422. This makes me suspect that some facts have escaped me; and I beg you to indulge my curiosity by informing me of them. . . .

Our friend Smith[1] is very successful here, and Gerard[2] is very well received. The *Epigoniad** I cannot so much promise for, though I have done all in my power

[1] *Theory of Moral Sentiments.* [2] *Essay on Taste.* * [By Wilkie.]

to forward it, particularly by writing a letter to the *Critical Review*, which you may peruse. I find, however, some good judges profess a great esteem for it, but *habent sua fata libelli:* however, if you want a little flattery to the author, (which I own is very refreshing to an author,) you may tell him that Lord Chesterfield said to me he was a great poet. I imagine that Wilkie will be very much elevated by praise from an English Earl, and a Knight of the Garter, and an Ambassador, and a Secretary of State, and a man of so great reputation. For I observe that the greatest rustics are commonly most affected with such circumstances.

Ferguson's book[1] has a great deal of genius and fine writing, and will appear in time. . . .

FROM DR. BIRCH TO DR. ROBERTSON.

LONDON, *Feb. 8th*, 1759.

DEAR SIR,—I have just read over the second volume of your excellent *History*, and the satisfaction which I have received from the perusal of it, and the gratitude which I owe you for the honour done me in it, as well as for so valuable a present, will not permit me to lose one post in returning you my sincerest acknowledgments. My Lord Royston likewise desires me to transmit to you his thanks and compliments in the strongest terms.

Though your work has been scarce a fortnight in the hands of the public, I can already inform you, upon the authority of the best judges, that the spirit and elegance of the composition, and the candour, moderation, and humanity which run through it, will secure you the general approbation both of the present age and of posterity, and raise the character of our country in a species of writing, in which of all others it has been most defective.

If the second volume of the *State Papers* of Lord Burleigh, published since Christmas here, had appeared before your *History* had been finished, it would have furnished you with reasons for entertaining a less favourable opinion of Mary Queen of Scots, in one or two points, than you seem at present possessed of. The principal is with regard to her last intrigues and correspondences, which were the immediate cause of her death. And I could wish you had likewise seen a manuscript account of her trial in Lord Royston's possession. This account is much fuller than Camden's, whose History is justly to be suspected in everything relating to her,—or than any other that has yet seen the light. It contains so ample a state of the evidence produced of her guilt as, I think, leaves no doubt of it, notwithstanding that the witnesses were not confronted with her,—a manner of proceeding which, though certainly due to every person accused, was not usual either before her time or long after.

You conclude in the note, vol. i. p. 307, in favour of her innocence from any criminal intrigue with Rizzio, from the silence of Randolph on that head. But I apprehend, that in opposition to this allegation you may be urged with the joint letter of that gentleman and the Earl of Bedford, of 27th March 1566, in your Appendix, No. xv. p. 22.

I desire you to make my compliments acceptable to Sir David Dalrymple and Mr. Davidson, and to believe me to be, Dear Sir, your most obliged, and most obedient humble servant, THOMAS BIRCH.

[1] *Essay on the History of Civil Society.*

FROM SIR GILBERT ELLIOT TO DR. ROBERTSON.

ADMIRALTY, *January 20th*, 1759.

DEAR SIR,—Millar has just sent me the *History of Scotland*. I cannot imagine why he should delay the publication so long as the first of February, for I well know that the printing has been completed a great while. You could have sent me no present which, on its own account, I should have esteemed so much; but you have greatly enhanced its value, by allowing me to accept it as a memorial and testimony of a friendship which I have long cultivated with equal satisfaction and sincerity. I am no stranger to your book, though your copy is but just put into my hands; David Hume so far indulged my impatience as to allow me to carry to the country, during the holidays, the loose sheets which he happened to have by him. In that condition I read it quite through with the greatest satisfaction, and in much less time than I ever employed on any portion of history of the same length. I had certainly neither leisure nor inclination to exercise the function of a critic; carried along with the stream of the narration, I only felt, when I came to the conclusion, that you had greatly exceeded the expectations I had formed, though, I do assure you, these were not a little sanguine. If, upon a more deliberate perusal, I discover any blemish, I shall point it out without any scruple; at present, it seems to me that you have rendered the period you treat of as interesting as any part of our British story; the views you open of policy, manners, and religion, are ingenious, solid, and deep. Your work will certainly be ranked in the highest historical class; and for my own part, I think it, besides, a composition of uncommon genius and eloquence. I was afraid you might have been interrupted by the Reformation, but I find it much otherwise; you treat it with great propriety, and, in my opinion, with sufficient freedom. No revolution, whether civil or religious, can be accomplished without that degree of ardour and passion, which, in a later age, will be matter of ridicule to men who do not feel the occasion, and enter into the spirit of the times. But I must not get into dissertations; I hope you will ever believe me, with great regard, Dear Sir, your most obedient and faithful servant,

GILB. ELLIOT.

NOTE D, p. 143.

FROM BARON D'HOLBACH TO DR. ROBERTSON.

PARIS, *the 30th of May* 1768.

SIR,—I received but a few days ago the favour of your letter, sent to me by Mr. Andrew Stuart; I am very proud of being instrumental in contributing to the translation of the valuable work you are going to publish. The excellent work you have published already is a sure sign of the reception your *History of Charles V.* will meet with in the Continent; such an interesting subject deserves undoubtedly the attention of all Europe. You are very much in the right of being afraid of the hackney translators of Holland and Paris; accordingly, I thought it my duty to find out an able hand capable of answering your desire. M. Suard, a gentleman well known for his style in French, and his knowledge in the English language, has, at my request, undertaken the translation of your valuable book;

I know nobody in this country capable of performing better such a grand design. Consequently, the best way will be for your bookseller, as soon as he publishes one sheet, to send it immediately *à Monsieur M. Suard, Directeur de la Gazette de France, rue St. Roch à Paris.* By means of this, the sheets of your book will be translated as soon as they come from the press, provided the bookseller of London is very strict in not showing the same favour to any other man upon the Continent. —I have the honour to be, with great consideration, Sir, your most obedient and humble servant,

D'Holbach.

Note E, p. 150.

The following letters have no immediate connexion with the history of Dr. Robertson's Life, but, I trust, that no apology is necessary for their insertion here.

From Mr. Hume to Dr. Robertson.

Paris, 1*st December* 1763.

Dear Robertson,—Among other agreeable circumstances which attend me at Paris, I must mention that [I have got] a Lady for a translator, a woman of merit, the widow of an advocate. She was before very poor, and known but to few; but this work has got her reputation, and procured her a pension from the Court, which sets her at her ease. She tells me that she has got a habit of industry; and would continue, if I could point out to her any other English book she could undertake, without running the risk of being anticipated by any other translator. Your *History of Scotland* is translated, and is in the press; but I recommended to her your *History of Charles V.*, and promised to write to you, in order to know when it would be printed, and to desire you to send over the sheets from London as they came from the press: I should put them into her hands, and she would by that means have the start of every other translator. My two volumes last published are at present in the press. She has a very easy, natural style: sometimes she mistakes the sense, but I now correct her manuscript, and should be happy to render you the same service, if my leisure permit me, as I hope it will. Do you ask me about my course of life? I can only say, that I eat nothing but ambrosia, drink nothing but nectar, breathe nothing but incense, and tread on nothing but flowers. Every man I meet, and still more every lady, would think they were wanting in the most indispensable duty, if they did not make to me a long and elaborate harangue in my praise. What happened last week, when I had the honour of being presented to the D—n's children at Versailles, is one of the most curious scenes I have yet passed through. The Duc de B. the eldest, a boy of ten years old, stepped forth and told me how many friends and admirers I had in this country, and that he reckoned himself in the number, from the pleasure he had received from the reading of many passages in my works. When he had finished, his brother, the Count de P., who is two years younger, began his discourse, and informed me, that I had been long and impatiently expected in France; and that he himself expected soon to have great satisfaction from the reading of my fine History. But what is more curious; when I was carried thence to the Count d'A., who is but four years of age, I heard him mumble something, which, though he had forgot it in the way, I conjectured from

some scattered words, to have been also a panegyric dictated to him. Nothing could more surprise my friends, the Parisian philosophers, than this incident. . . . It is conjectured that this honour was paid me by express order from the D., who, indeed, is not on any occasion, sparing in my praise.

All this attention and panegyric was at first oppressive to me; but now it sits more easy. I have recovered, in some measure, the use of the language, and am falling into friendships, which are very agreeable; much more so than silly, distant admiration. They now begin to banter me, and tell droll stories of me, which they have either observed themselves, or have heard from others; so that you see I am beginning to be at home. It is probable that this place will be long my home. I feel little inclination to the factious barbarians of London, and have ever desired to remain in the place where I am planted. How much more so, when it is the best place in the world? I could here live in great abundance on the half of my income; for there is no place where money is so little requisite to a man who is distinguished either by his birth or by personal qualities. I could run out, you see, in a panegyric on the people; but you would suspect that this was a mutual convention between us. However, I cannot forbear observing, on what a different footing learning and the learned are here, from what they are among the factious barbarians above mentioned.

I have here met with a prodigious historical curiosity, the *Memoirs of King James II.*, in fourteen volumes, all wrote with his own hand, and kept in the Scots College. I have looked into it, and have made great discoveries. It will be all communicated to me; and I have had an offer of access to the Secretary of State's office, if I want to know the despatches of any French Minister that resided in London. But these matters are much out of my head.* I beg of you to visit Lord Marischal, who will be pleased with your company. I have little paper remaining, and less time, and therefore conclude abruptly, by assuring you that I am, Dear Doctor, yours sincerely,

DAVID HUME.

FROM MR. HUME TO DR. ROBERTSON.

LONDON, 19*th March* 1767.

MY DEAR SIR,—You do extremely right in applying to me wherever it is the least likely I can serve you or any of your friends. I consulted immediately with General Conway, who told me, as I suspected, that the chaplains to forts and garrisons were appointed by the War Office, and did not belong to his department. Unhappily I have but a slight acquaintance with Lord Barrington, and cannot venture to ask him any favour; but I shall call on Pryce Campbell, though not of my acquaintance, and shall inquire of him the canals through which this affair may be conducted: perhaps it may lie in my power to facilitate it by some means or other.

I shall endeavour to find out the unhappy philosopher you mention, though it will be difficult for me to do him any service. He is an ingenious man, but unfortunate in his conduct, particularly in the early part of his life. The world is so cruel as never to overlook these flaws; and nothing but hypocrisy can fully cover them from observation. There is not so effectual a scourer of reputations in the

* [So far this letter, and from the words, "Do you ask me," &c., was translated by M. Suard, in an article in the *Feuilleton du Publiciste*, Samedi, 17 Fructidor, an X.]

world. I wish that I had never parted with that *Lixivium*, in case I should at any future time have occasion for it. . . . . A few days before my arrival in London, Mr. Davenport had carried to Mr. Conway a letter of Rousseau's, in which that philosopher says, that he had never meant to refuse the King's bounty, that he would be proud of accepting it, but that he would owe it entirely to his Majesty's generosity and that of his Ministers, and would refuse it if it came through any other canal whatsoever, even that of Mr. Davenport. Mr. Davenport then addressed himself to Mr. Conway, and asked whether it was not possible to recover what this man's madness had thrown away? The Secretary replied, that I should be in London in a few days, and that he would take no steps in the affair but at my desire and with my approbation. When the matter was proposed to me, I exhorted the General to do this act of charity to a man of genius, however wild and extravagant. The King, when applied to, said, that since the pension had once been promised, it should be granted, notwithstanding all that had passed in the interval. And thus the affair is happily finished, unless some new extravagance come across the philosopher, and engage him to reject what he has anew applied for. If he knew my situation with General Conway he probably would; for he must then conjecture that the affair could not be done without my consent.

Ferguson's book goes on here with great success. A few days ago I saw Mrs. Montague, who has just finished it with great pleasure: I mean, she was sorry to finish it, but had read it with great pleasure. I asked her, Whether she was satisfied with the style? Whether it did not savour somewhat of the country? O yes, said she, a great deal: it seems almost impossible that any one could write such a style except a Scotsman.

I find you prognosticate a very short date to my administration; I really believe that few (but not evil) will be my days. My absence will not probably allow my claret time to ripen, much less to sour. However that may be, I hope to drink out the remainder of it with you in mirth and jollity.—I am, sincerely yours, *usque ad aras.*

DAVID HUME.

[The passage in the foregoing letter with respect to Rousseau, induces me to add to it a letter from Mr. Hume to the late Sir Gilbert Elliot, written in the year 1762. It relates entirely to that singular and eccentric genius, and shews the deep interest Mr. Hume had taken in his fortunes, long before their personal acquaintance commenced. The original is in the possession of Lord Minto.

DEAR SIR,—I received a letter, a few days ago, from a lady in the Court of France, with whom I have been for some time in an epistolary correspondence, and who bears a very high character for knowledge and merit. She had wrote to me on the supposition I was still in London, because my last letter to her was dated from that place: and she recommends to me, in very earnest terms, the famous Rousseau, who is obliged to fly France, on account of some passages in a new *Treatise of Education* which he has published. You may believe, that it gave me great uneasiness that I could not fulfil a duty which would have been so agreeable to me, and which would have connected me with a man whose character and talents I so much admire. I do not remember whether I have ever had a

conversation with you on the writings of that author, and I know not whether you esteem them as much as I do. For my part, though I see some tincture of extravagance in all of them, I also think I see so much eloquence and force of imagination, such an energy of expression, and such a boldness of conception, as entitles him to a place among the first writers of the age. As to his personal character, I shall give it you in the words of my correspondent, after remarking that all the world speaks of him in the same style.—" Monsieur Rousseau passe chez la plupart des gens en ce pays pour un homme singulier. A prendre cette epithète selon sa vraye signification, elle lui est justement donnée; car il diffère à beaucoup d'égards de la façon d'agir et de penser des hommes d'à présent. Il a le cœur droit, l'âme noble et disintéressée, et craint toute espèce de dépendance, et par cette raison, il a mieux aimé, étant en France, gagner sa vie en copiant de la musique, que de recevoir les bienfaits de ses meilleurs amis, qui s'empressoient de réparer sa mauvaise fortune. Cette délicatesse peut paroître excessive, mais elle n'a rien de criminelle, et même elle suppose des sentimens élevés. Il fuit le commerce du monde; il ne se plait que dans la solitude: Ce goût pour la retraite lui a fait des ennemis; l'amour propre de ceux qui l'ont recherché s'est trouvé blessé de ses refus. Mais malgré sa misanthropie apparente, je ne crois pas qu'il y ait nulle part un homme plus doux, plus humain, plus compatissant aux peines des autres, et plus patient dans les siennes. En un mot, sa vertu paroit si pure, si constante, si uniforme, que jusqu'à présent, ceux qui le haïssent n'ont pu trouver, que dans leur propre cœur, des raisons pour le suspecter. Pour moi, avec des apparences aussi avantageuses, j'aimerois mieux en être trompé, que de me défier de sa sincérité," &c.

I own that I was extremely struck with the situation of so extraordinary a man, and having a great desire of being of some use to him, though absent, I have ventured to give you this trouble. Our present King and present Minister are desirous of being thought encouragers of learning: Can they have a more proper opportunity of showing to the whole world that they are in earnest? Monsieur Rousseau is now thrown out of his ordinary course of livelihood; and though he rejects presents from private persons, he may not think himself degraded by a pension from a great monarch: and it would be a signal victory over the French, worth a hundred of our Mindens, to protect and encourage a man of genius whom they had persecuted. I beseech you to advance this topic in places where your opinion may be able to produce the desired effect. It would be a favour to the ministers to suggest such an action to them. I fancy Rousseau's crime is only some sallies of Republicanism, and Protestantism, and satire against French manners; for I do not find that, in any of his writings, he has ever gone farther.

I have hitherto been a wanderer on the face of the earth, without any abiding city; but I have now at last purchased a house, which I am repairing, though I cannot say that I have yet fixed any property in the earth, but only in the air: for it is the third story of James's Court, and it cost me five hundred pounds. It is somewhat dear, but I shall be exceedingly well lodged. On comparing my situation with poor Rousseau's, I cannot but reflect how much better booksellers we have in this country than they in France.—I am, Dear Sir, yours sincerely,

DAVID HUME.

EDINBURGH, *5th July* 1762.

I shall subjoin a short paragraph from another letter (now lying before me) of Mr. Hume's to the same correspondent. The pleasantry, I am sensible, is somewhat local; but it will be amusing to the few who have any recollection of Edinburgh forty years ago.

EDINBURGH, 16*th of October* 1769.

* * * * * * * *

I have been here settled about two months; and am here, body and soul, without casting the least thought of regret to London, or even to Paris. I think it improbable, that I shall ever in my life cross the Tweed, except perhaps a jaunt to the north of England, for health or amusement. I live still, and must for a twelvemonth, in my old house in James's Court, which is very cheerful, and even elegant, but too small to display my great talents for cookery, the science to which I intend to addict the remaining years of my life. I have just now lying on the table before me a receipt for making *Soupe à la Reine*, copied with my own hand. For beef, and cabbage, (a charming dish,) and old mutton, and old claret, nobody excels me. I make also sheep-head broth in a manner that Mr. Keith[1] speaks of it for eight days after, and the Duc de Nivernois would bind himself apprentice to my lass[2] to learn it. I have already sent a challenge to David Moncrief:[3] you will see, that in a twelvemonth, he will take to the writing of History, the field I have deserted; for as to the giving of dinners, he can now have no farther pretensions. I should have made very bad use of my abode in Paris, if I could not get the better of a mere Provincial like him. All my friends encourage me in this ambition, as thinking it will redound very much to my honour.]

[Continuation of the above extract, copied from the original letter.—D.S.

I am delighted to see the daily and hourly progress of madness, and folly, and wickedness in England. The consummation of these qualities are the true ingredients for making a fine narrative in History, especially if followed by some signal and ruinous convulsion, as I hope will soon be the case with that pernicious people. He must be a very bad cook indeed, that cannot make a palatable dish from the whole. You see in my reflections and allusions, I still mix my old and new profession together.—I am, Dear Sir Gilbert, your most obedient humble servant,

DAVID HUME.

P.S.—I beg my respects to Lady Elliot.]*

In comparing the amiable qualities displayed in Mr. Hume's familiar letters, and (according to the universal testimony of his friends) exhibited in the whole tenor of his private conduct, with those passages in his Metaphysical writings which strike at the root of the moral and religious principles of our nature, I have sometimes pleased myself with recollecting the ingenious argument against the theories of Epicurus, which Cicero deduces from the history of that philosopher's life. "Ac mihi quidem, quod et ipse vir bonus fuit, et multi Epicurei fuerunt et

[1] Afterwards Sir Robert Murray Keith, K.B.

[2] Formerly a common name in Scotland for a cook-maid, [or rather maid-servant in general.]

[3] David Stewart Moncrief, one of the Barons of Exchequer in Scotland.

* [*From Author's last additions.*]

hodie sunt et in amicitia fideles, et in omni vita constantes et graves, nec voluptate sed officio consilia moderantes, hoc videtur major vis honestatis et minor voluptatis. Ita enim vivunt quidam, ut eorum vita refellatur oratio. Atque ut ceteri existimantur dicere melius quam facere, sic hi mihi videntur facere melius quam dicere."*

NOTE F, p. 164.

I have allotted this Note for some letters from Mr. Gibbon to Dr. Robertson, which appeared to me likely to interest the public curiosity.

FROM MR. GIBBON TO DR. ROBERTSON.

BENTINCK STREET, *Nov. the 3d*, 1779.

* * * * * * * *

When I express my strong hope that you will visit London next spring, I must acknowledge that it is of the most interesting kind. Besides the pleasure which I shall enjoy in your society and conversation, I cherish the expectation of deriving much benefit from your candid and friendly criticism. The remainder of my first period of the Decline and Fall, &c., which will end with the ruin of the Western Empire, is already very far advanced; but the subject has already grown so much under my hands, that it will form a second and third volume in quarto, which will probably go to the press in the course of the ensuing summer. Perhaps you have seen in the papers, that I was appointed some time ago one of the Lords of Trade; but I believe you are enough acquainted with the country to judge, that the business of my new office has not much interrupted the progress of my studies. The attendance in Parliament is indeed more laborious; I apprehend a rough session, and I fear that a black cloud is gathering in Ireland.

Be so good as to present my sincere compliments to Mr. Smith, Mr. Ferguson, and if he should still be with you, to Dr. Gillies, for whose acquaintance I esteem myself much indebted to you. I have often considered, with some sort of envy, the valuable society which you possess in so narrow a compass.—I am, Dear Sir, with the highest regard, most faithfully yours, E. GIBBON.

FROM MR. GIBBON TO DR. ROBERTSON.

LONDON, *September* 1, 1783.

DEAR SIR,—Your candid and friendly interpretation will ascribe to business, to study, to pleasure, to constitutional indolence, or to any other venial cause, the guilt of neglecting so valuable a correspondent as yourself. I should have thanked you for the opportunities which you have afforded me of forming an acquaintance with several men of merit who deserve your friendship, and whose character and conversation suggest a very pleasing idea of the society which you enjoy at Edinburgh. I must at the same time lament, that the hurry of a London life has not allowed me to obtain so much as I could have wished of their company, and must have given them an unfavourable opinion of my hospitality, unless they have weighed with indulgence the various obstacles of time and place. Mr. Stewart I had not even the pleasure of seeing; he passed through this city in his way to Paris, while I was confined with a painful fit of the gout, and in the short interval

* [*De Finibus*, Lib. II. cap. XXV.]

of his stay, the hours of meeting which were mutually proposed, could not be made to agree with our respective engagements. Mr. Dalzel, who is undoubtedly a modest and learned man, I have had the pleasure of seeing; but his arrival has unluckily fallen on a time of year, and a particular year, in which I have been very little in town. I should rejoice if I could repay these losses by a visit to Edinburgh, a more tranquil scene, to which yourself and our friend Mr. Adam Smith, would powerfully attract me. But this project, which, in a leisure hour, has often amused my fancy, must now be resigned, or must be postponed at least to a very distant period. In a very few days, (before I could receive the favour of an answer,) I shall begin my journey to Lausanne in Switzerland, where I shall fix my residence, in a delightful situation, with a dear and excellent friend of that country, still mindful of my British friends, but renouncing, without reluctance, the tumult of Parliament, the hopes and fears, the prejudices and passions of political life, to which my nature has always been averse. Our noble friend Lord Loughborough has endeavoured to divert me from this resolution; he rises every day in dignity and reputation, and if the means of patronage had not been so strangely reduced by our modern reformers, I am persuaded his constant and liberal kindness would more than satisfy the moderate desires of a philosopher. What I cannot hope for from the favour of ministers, I must patiently expect from the course of nature; and this exile, which I do not view in a very gloomy light, will be terminated in due time by the deaths of aged ladies, whose inheritance will place me in an easy and even affluent situation. But these particulars are only designed for the ear of friendship.

I have already despatched to Lausanne two immense cases of books, the tools of my historical manufacture; others I shall find on the spot, and that country is not destitute of public and private libraries, which will be freely opened for the use of a man of letters. The tranquil leisure which I shall enjoy, will be partly employed in the prosecution of my history; but although my diligence will be quickened by the prospect of returning to England, to publish the last volumes (three, I am afraid) of this laborious work, yet I shall proceed with cautious steps to compose and to correct, and the dryness of my undertaking will be relieved by mixture of more elegant and classical studies, more especially of the Greek authors. Such good company will, I am sure, be pleasant to the historian, and I am inclined to believe that it will be beneficial to the work itself. I have been lately much flattered with the praise of Dr. Blair, and a censure of the Abbé de Mably; both of them are precisely the men from whom I could wish to obtain praise and censure, and both these gratifications I have the pleasure of sharing with yourself. The Abbé appears to hate, and affects to despise, every writer of his own times, who has been well received by the public; and Dr. Blair, who is a master in one species of composition, has displayed, on every subject, the warmest feeling, and the most accurate judgment. I will frankly own that my pride is elated, as often as I find myself ranked in the triumvirate of British historians of the present age, and though I feel myself the Lepidus, I contemplate with pleasure the superiority of my colleagues. Will you be so good as to assure Dr. A. Smith of my regard and attachment. I consider myself as writing to both, and will not fix him for a separate answer. My direction is, *A Monsieur Monsieur Gibbon, à Lausanne en Suisse.* I shall often plume myself on the friendship of Dr. Robertson, but must I

tell foreigners, that while the meaner heroes fight, Achilles has retired from the war?—I am, my Dear Sir, most affectionately yours, E. GIBBON.

FROM MR. GIBBON TO DR. ROBERTSON.

LORD SHEFFIELD'S, DOWNING STREET,
March 26, 1788.

DEAR SIR,—An error in your direction (to Wimpole Street, where I never had a house) delayed some time the delivery of your very obliging letter, but that delay is not sufficient to excuse me for not taking an earlier notice of it. Perhaps the number of minute but indispensable cares that seem to multiply before the hour of publication, may prove a better apology, especially with a friend who has himself passed through the same labours to the same consummation. The important day is now fixed to the 8th of May, and it was chosen by Cadell, as it coincides with the end of the fifty-first year of the author's age. That honest and liberal bookseller has invited me to celebrate the double festival by a dinner at his house. Some of our common friends will be present, but we shall all lament your absence, and that of Dr. Adam Smith, (whose health and welfare will always be most interesting to me;) and it gives me real concern that the time of your visits to the metropolis has not agreed with my transient residence in my native country. I am grateful for the opportunity with which you furnish me of again perusing your works in their most improved state; and I have desired Cadell to despatch, for the use of my two Edinburgh friends, two copies of the last three volumes of my *History*. Whatever may be the inconstancy of taste or fashion, a rational lover of fame may be satisfied if he deserves and obtains your approbation. The praise which has ever been the most flattering to my ear is, to find my name associated with the names of Robertson and Hume; and provided I can maintain my place in the triumvirate, I am indifferent at what distance I am ranked below my companions and masters.

With regard to my present work, I am inclined to believe that it surpasses in variety and entertainment at least the second and third volumes. A long and eventful period is compressed into a smaller space, and the new barbarians who now assault and subvert the Roman Empire, enjoy the advantage of speaking their own language, and relating their own exploits.

After the publication of these last volumes, which extend to the siege of Constantinople, and comprise the ruins of Ancient Rome, I shall retire (in about two months) to Lausanne, and my friends will be pleased to hear that I enjoy in that retreat as much repose, and even happiness, as is consistent, perhaps, with the human condition. At proper intervals I hope to repeat my visits to England, but no change of circumstance or situation will probably tempt me to desert my Swiss residence, which unites almost every advantage that riches can give, or fancy desire. With regard to my future literary plans, I can add nothing to what you will soon read in my Preface. But an hour's conversation with you, would allow me to explain some visionary designs which sometimes float in my mind; and if I should ever form any serious resolution of labours, I would previously, though by the imperfect mode of a letter, consult you on the propriety and merit of any new undertakings.—I am, with great regard, Dear Sir, most faithfully yours,

E. GIBBON.

Note G, p. 167.

As Dr. Robertson received particular satisfaction from the approbation of the gentleman whose geographical researches suggested the first idea of this Disquisition, I flatter myself that no apology is necessary for the liberty I take in quoting a short extract from one of his letters.

From Major Rennell to Dr. Robertson.

London, 2*d July* 1791.

. . . After reading your book twice, I may with truth say, that I was never more instructed or amused than by the perusal of it; for although a great part of its subject had long been revolving in my mind, yet I had not been able to concentrate the matter in the manner you have done, or to make the different parts bear on each other.

The subject of the Appendix was what interested the public greatly; and was only to be acquired (if at all) by the study or perusal of a great number of different tracts; a task not to be accomplished by ordinary readers.

It gives me unfeigned pleasure to have been the instrument of suggesting such a task to you; and I shall reflect with pleasure, during my life, that I shall travel down to posterity with you; you, in your place, in the *great road* of History, whilst I keep the *side path* of Geography. Since I understood the subject, I have ever thought that the best historian is the best geographer; and if historians would direct a proper person, skilled in the principles of geography, to *embody* (as I may say) their ideas for them, the historian would find himself better served, than by relying on those who may be properly styled *map-makers*. For, after all, whence does the geographer derive his materials but from the labours of the historian! . . . .

Note H, p. 176.*

Since these remarks on Dr. Robertson's style were written, I have met with some critical reflections on the same subject by Mr. Burke, too honourable for Dr. Robertson to be suppressed in this publication, although, in some particulars, they do not coincide with the opinion I have presumed to state.[1]

"There is a style," says Mr. Burke, in a letter addressed to Mr. Murphy on his translation of Tacitus, "which daily gains ground amongst us, which I should be sorry to see further advanced by a writer of your just reputation. The tendency of the mode to which I allude is, to establish two very different idioms amongst us, and to introduce a marked distinction between the English that is written and the English that is spoken. This practice, if grown a little more general, would confirm this distemper, such I must think it, in our language, and perhaps render it incurable.

"From this feigned manner of *falsetto*, as I think the musicians call something of

[1] It is proper for me to mention, that I have no authority for the authenticity of the following passage but that of a London newspaper, in which it appeared some years ago. I do not find, however, that it has been ever called in question.

the same sort in singing, no one modern historian, Robertson only excepted, is perfectly free. It is assumed, I know, to give dignity and variety to the style. But whatever success the attempt may sometimes have, it is always obtained at the expense of purity, and of the graces that are natural and appropriate to our language. It is true, that when the exigence calls for auxiliaries of all sorts, and common language becomes unequal to the demands of extraordinary thoughts, something ought to be conceded to the necessities which make 'ambition virtue.' But the allowances to necessities ought not to grow into a practice. Those portents and prodigies ought not to grow too common. If you have, here and there, (much more rarely, however, than others of great and not unmerited fame,) fallen into an error, which is not that of the dull or careless, you have an author who is himself guilty, in his own tongue, of the same fault, in a very high degree. No author thinks more deeply, or paints more strongly; but he seldom or ever expresses himself naturally. It is plain, that comparing him with Plautus and Terence, or the beautiful fragments of Publius Syrus, he did not write the language of good conversation. Cicero is much nearer to it. Tacitus, and the writers of his time, have fallen into that vice by aiming at a poetical style. It is true, that eloquence in both modes of rhetoric is fundamentally the same; but the manner of handling it is totally different, even where words and phrases may be transferred from the one of these departments of writing to the other."

For this encomium on Dr. Robertson's style, when considered in contrast with that of Mr. Gibbon, (to whom it is presumable that Mr. Burke's strictures more particularly refer,) there is unquestionably a very solid foundation; but in estimating the merits of the former as an English writer, I must acknowledge that I should never have thought of singling out among his characteristical excellences, an approach to the language of good conversation. It is indeed surprising, when we attend to the elevation of that tone which he uniformly sustains, how very seldom his turn of expression can be censured as unnatural or affected. The graces of his composition, however, although great and various, are by no means those which are *appropriate to our language;* and, in fact, he knew too well the extent and the limits of his own powers to attempt them. Accordingly, he has aimed at perfections of a still higher order, the effect of which is scarcely diminished when we contemplate them through the medium of a foreign translation.

Lord Chesterfield's judgment with respect to Dr. Robertson, while it is equally flattering with that of Mr. Burke, appears to me more precise and just. "There is a history lately come out, of the reign of Mary Queen of Scots and her son King James, written by one Robertson, a Scotchman, which for *clearness, purity,* and *dignity,* I will not scruple to compare with the best historians extant, not excepting Davila, Guicciardini, and perhaps Livy."

May I be permitted to remark, that in the opposite extreme to that fault which Mr. Burke has here so justly censured, there is another originating in too close an adherence to what he recommends as the model of good writing, the ease and familiarity of colloquial discourse. In the productions of his more advanced years, he has occasionally fallen into it himself, and has sanctioned it by his example, in the numerous herd of his imitators, who are incapable of atoning for it, by copying the exquisite and inimitable beauties which abound in his compositions. For my own part, I can much more easily reconcile myself, in a grave and dignified argu-

ment, to the *dulcia vitia* of Tacitus and of Gibbon, than to that affectation of *cant* words and allusions which so often debases Mr. Burke's eloquence, and which was long ago stigmatized by Swift as "the most ruinous of all the corruptions of a language."

NOTE I, p. 177.

It might be considered by some as a blameable omission, if I were to pass over in silence the marks of regard which Dr. Robertson received from different literary Academies on the Continent. I have already taken notice of the honour conferred on him by the Royal Academy of History at Madrid; but it remains for me to mention, that, in 1781, he was elected one of the Foreign Members of the Academy of Sciences at Padua; and in 1783, one of the Foreign Members of the Imperial Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg.

From the last of these cities, he was honoured with another very flattering distinction, the intelligence of which was conveyed to him by his friend Dr. Rogerson, in a letter, from which the following passage is transcribed:—

"Your *History of America* was received and perused by her Imperial Majesty with singular marks of approbation. All your historical productions have been ever favourite parts of her reading. Not long ago, doing me the honour to converse with me upon historical composition, she mentioned you with particular distinction, and with much admiration of that sagacity and discernment displayed by you in painting the human mind and character, as diversified by the various causes that operated upon it, in those eras and states of society of which your subject led you to treat. She assigned you the place of first model in that species of composition. As to the *History of Charles V.*, she was pleased to add, *C'est le compagnon constant de tous mes voyages; je ne me lasse jamais à le lire, et particulièrement le premier volume.*

"She then presented a very handsome gold enamelled snuff-box, richly set with diamonds, ordering me to transmit it to you, and to desire your acceptance of it as a mark of her esteem, observing, at the same time, most graciously, that a person whose labours had afforded her so much satisfaction, merited some attention from her."

NOTE K, p. 179.

"The mixture of ecclesiastical and lay-members in the Church Courts is attended with the happiest effects. It corrects that *esprit de corps* which is apt to prevail in all assemblies of professional men. It affords the principal nobility and gentry of Scotland an opportunity of obtaining a seat in the General Assembly when any interesting object calls for their attendance; and although in the factious and troublesome times which our ancestors saw, the General Assembly, by means of this mixture, became a scene of political debate, this accidental evil is counterbalanced by permanent good; for the presence of those lay-members of high rank, whose names are usually found upon the roll of the Assembly, has a powerful influence in maintaining that connexion between church and state which is necessary for the peace, security, and welfare of both."[1]

[1] MS. of Dr. Hill.

NOTE L, p. 184.

The paper referred to in the text is entitled, "Reasons of Dissent from the Judgment and Resolution of the Commission, March 11, 1752, resolving to inflict no Censure on the Presbytery of Dunfermline for their Disobedience in relation to the Settlement of Inverkeithing." It is subscribed by Dr. Robertson, Dr. Blair, Mr. John Home, and a few of their friends. I shall subjoin the first two articles:—

1. "Because we conceive this sentence of the Commission to be inconsistent with the nature and first principles of society. When men are considered as individuals, we acknowledge that they have no guide but their own understanding, and no judge but their own conscience. But we hold it for an undeniable principle, that as members of society, they are bound in many instances to follow the judgment of the society. By joining together in society, we enjoy many advantages, which we could neither purchase nor secure in a disunited state. In consideration of these, we consent that regulations for public order shall be established, not by the private fancy of every individual, but by the judgment of the majority, or of those with whom the society has consented to entrust the legislative power. Their judgment must necessarily be absolute and final, and their decisions received as the voice and instruction of the whole. In a numerous society it seldom happens that all the members think uniformly concerning the wisdom and expedience of any public regulation; but no sooner is that regulation enacted, than private judgment is so far superseded, that even they who disapprove it, are, notwithstanding, bound to obey it, and to put it in execution if required; unless in a case of such gross iniquity and manifest violation of the original design of the society as justifies resistance to the supreme power, and makes it better to have the society dissolved than to submit to established iniquity. Such extraordinary cases we can easily conceive there may be, as will give any man a just title to seek the dissolution of the society to which he belongs, or at least will fully justify his withdrawing from it. But as long as he continues in it, professes regard for it, and reaps the emoluments of it, if he refuses to obey its laws, he manifestly acts both a disorderly and dishonest part; he lays claim to the privileges of the society while he contemns the authority of it, and by all principles of equity and reason is justly subjected to its censures. They who maintain that such disobedience deserves no censure, maintain in effect, that there should be no such thing as government and order. They deny those first principles by which men are united in society, and endeavour to establish such maxims as will justify not only licentiousness in ecclesiastical, but rebellion and disorder in civil government. And, therefore, as the Reverend Commission have, by their sentence, declared that disobedience to the supreme judicature of the Church neither infers guilt, nor deserves censure; as they have surrendered a right essential to the nature and subsistence of every society; as they have (so far as lay in them) betrayed the privileges and deserted the orders of the constitution, we could not have acted a dutiful part to the church, nor a safe one to ourselves, unless we had dissented from this sentence, and craved liberty to represent to this venerable Assembly that this deed appears to us to be manifestly beyond the powers of a Commission.

2. "Because this sentence of the Commission, as it is subversive of society in

general, so, in our judgments, it is absolutely inconsistent with the nature and preservation of ecclesiastical society in particular. The characters which we bear, of Ministers and Elders of this Church, render it unnecessary for us to declare, that we join with all Protestants in acknowledging the Lord Jesus Christ to be the only King and Head of his Church. We admit that the Church is not merely a voluntary society, but a society founded by the laws of Christ. But to his laws we conceive it to be most agreeable, that order should be preserved in the external administration of the affairs of the Church. And we contend, in the words of our *Confession of Faith*, 'That there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and the government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence according to the general rules of the word, which are always to be observed.' It is very evident that unless the Church were supported by continual miracles, and a perpetual and extraordinary interposition of Heaven, it can only subsist by those fundamental maxims by which all society subsists. A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. There can be no union, and by consequence there can be no society, where there is no subordination; and therefore since miracles are now ceased, we do conceive that no church or ecclesiastical society can exist without obedience required from its members, and enforced by proper sanctions. Accordingly, there never was any regularly constituted Church in the Christian world, where there was not at the same time some exercise of discipline and authority. It has indeed been asserted, 'That the censures of the Church are never to be inflicted, but upon open transgressors of the laws of Christ himself; and that no man is to be constructed an open transgressor of the laws of Christ for not obeying the commands of any assembly of fallible men, when he declares it was a conscientious regard to the will of Christ that led him to this disobedience.'—This is called asserting liberty of conscience, and supporting the rights of private judgment; and upon such reasonings the Reverend Commission proceeded in coming to that decision of which we now complain. But we think ourselves called on to say, and we say it with concern, that such principles as these appear to us calculated to establish the most extravagant maxims of independency, and to overthrow from the very foundation that happy ecclesiastical constitution which we glory in being members of, and which we are resolved to support. For upon these principles, no Church whatever, consisting, as every Church on earth must consist, of *fallible* men, has right to inflict any censure on any disobedient person. Let such person only think fit boldly to use the name of conscience, and sheltered under its authority, he acquires at once a right of doing whatsoever is good in his own eyes. If anarchy and confusion follow, as no doubt they will, there is it seems no remedy. We are sorry to say, that brethren who profess to hold such principles, ought to have acted more consistently with them, and not to have joined themselves to any Church till once they had found out an assembly of *infallible* men, to whose authority they would have acknowledged submission to be due. We allow to the right of private judgment all the extent and obligation that reason or religion requires; but we can never admit, that any man's private judgment gives him a right to disturb, with impunity, all public order. We hold, that as every man has a right to judge for himself in religious matters, so every Church, or society of Christians, has a right to judge for itself, what method of external administration is most

agreeable to the laws of Christ; and no man ought to become a member of that Church, who is not resolved to conform himself to its administration. We think it very consistent with conscience for inferiors to disapprove, in their own mind, of a judgment given by a superior court, and yet to put that judgment in execution as the deed of their superiors for conscience sake; seeing we humbly conceive it is, or ought to be, a matter of conscience with every member of the Church, to support the authority of that Church to which he belongs. Church censures are declared by our *Confession of Faith* to be 'necessary, not only for gaining and reclaiming the offending brethren, but also for deterring of others from the like offences, and for purging out the leaven which might leaven the whole lump.' What these censures are, and what the crimes against which they are directed, is easily to be learned from the constitution of every Church, and whoever believes its censure to be too severe, or its known orders and laws to be in any respect iniquitous, so that he cannot in conscience comply with them, ought to beware of involving himself in sin by entering into it; or if he hath rashly joined himself, he is bound as an honest man and a good Christian, to withdraw, and to keep his conscience clear and undefiled. But, on the other hand, if a judicature, which is appointed to be the guardian and defender of the laws and orders of the society, shall absolve them who break their laws, from all censure, and by such a deed encourage and invite to future disobedience, we conceive it will be found that they have exceeded their powers, and betrayed their trust in the most essential instance." . . . .

NOTE M, p. 185.

"Dr. Robertson's system with respect to the Law of Patronage proceeded on the following principles:—That as patronage is the law of the land, the courts of a national church established and protected by law, and all the individual ministers of that church, are bound, in as far as it depends upon exertions arising from the duties of their place, to give it effect: that every opposition to the legal rights of patrons tends to diminish that reverence which all the subjects of a free government ought to entertain for the law; and that it is dangerous to accustom the people to think that they can elude the law or defeat its operation, because success in one instance leads to greater licentiousness. Upon these principles Dr. Robertson thought that the church courts betrayed their duty to the constitution, when the spirit of their decisions, or negligence in enforcing obedience to their orders, created unnecessary obstacles to the exercise of the right of patronage, and fostered in the minds of the people the false idea that they have a right to choose their own ministers, or even a negative upon the nomination of the patron. He was well aware that the subjects of Great Britain are entitled to apply in a constitutional manner for the repeal of every law which they consider as a grievance. But while he supported patronage as the existing law, he regarded it also as the most expedient method of settling vacant parishes. It did not appear to him that the people are competent judges of those qualities which a minister should possess in order to be a useful teacher either of the doctrines of pure religion, or of the precepts of sound morality. He suspected that if the probationers of the Church were taught to consider their success in obtaining a settlement as depending upon a popular election, many of them would be tempted to adopt a manner of preaching

more calculated to please the people than to promote their edification. He thought that there is little danger to be apprehended from the abuse of the law of patronage, because the presentee must be chosen from amongst those whom the Church itself had approved of, and had licensed as qualified for the office of the ministry; because a presentee cannot be admitted to the benefice, if any relevant charge as to his life or doctrine be proved against him; and because, after ordination and admission, he is liable to be deposed for improper conduct. When every possible precaution is thus taken to prevent unqualified persons from being introduced into the Church, or those who afterwards prove unworthy from remaining in it, the occasional evils and abuses from which no human institution is exempted, could not, in the opinion of Dr. Robertson, be fairly urged as reasons against the law of patronage? . . . .

"Such was the system which, in conjunction with the friends of his youth, Dr. Robertson ably supported for thirty years after his first appearance in the General Assembly. In speaking upon a particular question, he sometimes gave the outlines of this system for the satisfaction of the House in general, and the instruction of the younger members. The decisions, which for a long course of years he dictated, form a common law of the Church in which the system is unfolded. His conversation imprinted upon the minds of those who were admitted to it during the course of the Assembly, the principles which pervaded his decisions: and thus were diffused throughout the Church the rational and consistent ideas of Presbyterian government upon which he and his friends uniformly acted.

"These ideas continue to direct the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland. For although it is not likely that any member of that House will ever possess the unrivalled, undisputed influence with his brethren to which peculiar advantages of character and situation conducted Dr. Robertson, his principles are so thoroughly understood, and so cordially approved by the great majority of the Church of Scotland, that by means of that attention to the business and forms of the House which is paid by some of his early friends who yet survive, and by a succession of younger men trained in his school, the Ecclesiastical affairs of Scotland proceed on the same orderly systematical plan which was first introduced by the ability, the prudence, the firmness, the candour and moderation which he displayed upon every occasion."

Note N, p. 191.

A few particulars, "in addition to Dr. Erskine's funeral sermon on the death of Dr. Robertson," have been kindly communicated to me by my friend the Rev. Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood, Bart. The testimony which they contain to Dr. Robertson's merits as an ecclesiastical leader, will have no small weight with those who are acquainted with the worth and the talents of the writer.

"In mentioning the character of Dr. Robertson as a leader of the prevailing party in the Church, there is a circumstance which ought not to be omitted, by which he distinguished himself from all his predecessors who had held the same situation. Before his time, those of the clergy who pretended to guide the deliberations of the General Assembly, derived the chief part of their influence from their connexion with the men who had the management of Scots affairs. They

allowed themselves to receive instructions from them, and even from those who acted under them. They looked up to them as their patrons, and ranged themselves with their dependents. Their influence, of consequence, subsisted no longer than the powers from which it was derived. A change in the management of Scots affairs either left the prevailing party in the Church without their leaders, or obliged their leaders to submit to the meanness of receiving instructions from other patrons.—Dr. Robertson, from the beginning, disengaged himself completely from a dependence which was never respectable, and to which he felt himself superior. He had the countenance of men in power; but he received it as a man who judged for himself, and whose influence was his own. The political changes of his time did not affect his situation. The different men who had the management of Scots affairs uniformly co-operated with him,—but though they assisted him, they looked up to *his personal influence* in the Church, which no man in the country believed to be derived from *them*.

"Those who differed most in opinion with Dr. Robertson, but who are sincerely attached to the interests and to the integrity of the Church, must allow this conduct to have been both respectable and meritorious. It will always reflect honour on his memory, and has left an important lesson to his successors.

"It is not useless to mention his fairness in the debates of the Assembly. Whether his opponents were convinced by his arguments or not, they were commonly sensible of the candour with which he stated them, and of the personal respect with which they were treated by him. And though the concessions which he was always ready to make to them when they did not affect the substance of his own argument, might be imputed to political sagacity as well as to candour, there was uniformly an appearance of candour in his manner, by which he preserved their good opinion, and which greatly contributed to extend his influence among his own friends. Like all popular meetings, the General Assembly sometimes contains individuals who have more acuteness than delicacy, and who allow themselves to eke out their arguments by rude and personal invectives. Dr. Robertson had a superior address in replying to men of this cast, without adopting their asperity, and often made them feel the absurdity of the personal attack, by the attention which he seemed to bestow on their argument.

"It should be mentioned also, that Dr. Robertson's early example, and his influence in more advanced life, chiefly contributed to render the debates in the Assembly interesting and respectable, by bringing forward all the men of abilities to their natural share of the public business. Before his time this had been almost entirely in the hands of the older members of the Church, who were the only persons that were thought entitled to deliver their opinions, and whose influence was often derived more from their age than from their judgment or their talents.

"I do not know whether the reasons, which led Dr. Robertson to retire from the Assembly after 1780, have ever been thoroughly understood. They were not suggested by his age, for he was then only fifty-nine; nor by any diminution of his influence, for, in the apprehension of the public, it was at that time as great as it had ever been. It is very probable that he anticipated a time when a new leader might come forward; and thought it better to retire while his influence was undiminished, than to run the risk, in the end of his life, of a struggle with younger men, who might be as successful as he had been. But I recollect distinctly, what

he once said to myself on the subject, which I am persuaded he repeated to many others. He had been often reproached by the more violent men of his party for not adopting stronger measures, than he thought either right or wise. He had yielded to them many points against his own judgment; but they were not satisfied: he was plagued with letters of reproach and remonstrance on a variety of subjects, and he complained of the petulance and acrimony with which they were written. But there was one subject, which, for some years before he retired, had become particularly uneasy to him, and on which he said he had been more urged and fretted than on all the other subjects of contention in the Church; the scheme into which many of his friends entered zealously for abolishing subscription to the *Confession of Faith and Formula.* This he expressly declared his resolution to resist in every form. But he was so much teased with remonstrances on the subject, that he mentioned them as having at least *confirmed* his resolution to retire. He claimed to himself the merit of having prevented this controversy from being agitated in the Assemblies; but warned me as a young man that it would become the chief controversy of my time, and stated to me the reasons which had determined his opinion on the subject. The conversation was probably about 1782 or 1783. I have a distinct recollection of it; though I have no idea that his prediction will be verified, as the controversy seems to be more asleep now than it was a few years ago."

[To the proofs which I have already had occasion to produce of Dr. Robertson's liberal and tolerating spirit towards those classes of Dissenters from the established Church of Scotland whose views, on many important points, were the most obnoxious to his own principles and feelings as a Presbyterian, I shall subjoin two letters from the late learned and excellent Dr. Douglas, Bishop of Carlisle, and afterwards of Salisbury. Their contents speak sufficiently for themselves, without the aid of any comment.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *March* 17, 1791.

DEAR SIR,—That I have not, long ago, acknowledged your favour of February 8th, has been owing to my having been much harassed with the gout, which seems now to promise me some respite.

The liberality of your sentiments with regard to the application of the Episcopal clergy, does you great honour. In this age of unlimited toleration, it has much surprised me, that a Bill to remove persecuting penalties, from a set of men who have given substantial proofs of their being no longer bad subjects, should have failed in two sessions of Parliament. I make no doubt that your sentiments, and those of your brethren of the Established Church of Scotland, will be of service in removing the prejudices and mistakes which have hitherto prevented these poor people's relief. Not having of late attended the House, I sent a copy of your letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury. I had, last year, put into his Grace's hands a letter from Principal Campbell of Aberdeen, expressive of sentiments agreeing with yours on the subject; and I flatter myself that they will be communicated to the Lord Chancellor, and make a suitable impression.

You do me great honour in mentioning your intended present of a copy of your

new publication, which I have long expected with impatience, as I had heard of it from Cadell many months ago.—I am, Dear Sir, your most faithful and obedient servant, J. CARLIOL.

LONDON, *May* 28, 1792.

DEAR SIR,—I did not sooner acknowledge yours of the 1st, because the fate of the Bill, about which you interested yourself, remained long in suspense in the House of Lords. I can now inform you, that it passed there a few days ago, and is now before the other House, where, I make no doubt, it will meet with no opposition. Lord Chancellor seems to be the single person in either House, who ever entertained any scruples on the subject, from the time the matter was first brought into Parliament, two or three years ago. The friends of the Bill had in vain endeavoured to remove his prejudices; and last year, though I put your former letter and another from Dr. Campbell, equally favourable to the claim of your late nonjurors, into his hands, no impression seemed to have been made. It was determined this year to begin in the House of Lords; and on the second reading of the Bill, Lord Chancellor found it necessary to state what his objections were; and these were so completely answered by Lord Stormont, the Bishop of St. David's, and others, that his Lordship dropped his opposition, and lent his assistance very kindly in the committee, by the introduction of several clauses, which were readily adopted. By one of those clauses, besides taking the oaths, the Episcopal clergy now claiming relief, are to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, which Bishop Skinner, their delegate here, seems to think will be cheerfully complied with. The liberal sentiments of the clergy of the Established Church of Scotland, on this subject, were mentioned in the most honourable terms, in the course of the debates; by Lord Stormont in particular.

I hope this will find you perfectly recovered from your late indisposition; and, with sincere wishes for the continuance of your health, I remain, Dear Sir, your most faithful and obedient servant,

J. SARUM.

To these letters I shall add a third, from a foreign statesman, whose enlightened and benevolent mind stamps a value on the slightest relic with which his name is connected.

MUY S^R MIO,—Por relaciones autenticas y noticias originales del *Caballero que està á la cabeza de los pocos Catolicos residentes en esa ciúdad de Edimburgo* se ha sabido aquì quan singularmente humano y benevolo se há manifestado V. S. hacia ellos en las Juntas y deliberaciones del clero Protestante de Escocia en medio de las persecuciones suscitadas contra los mismos à principios de Febrero de este año; exponiendose tal vez por ello á sufrir injurias è insultos de los fanaticos.

Me parece que la loable conducta de V. S. en tan criticas circunstancias le sera muy honorifica, y grangearà el mayor credito y aprecio en el concepto de todos los hombres dotados de moderacion, probidad y discernimiento, como muy propia de un sabio juicioso y humano, y semejante á la que han tenido todos los de su clase en los siglos mas ilustrados.

Puedo asegurar á V. S. que tales han sido los efectos que produxo esta noticia

en la Rl. Academia dela Historia: la qual al oir el generoso proceder de su docto individuo, y sus buenos oficios á favor de nuestros hermanos afligidos se complaciò sinceramente; confirmandola de nuevo esta prueba en el ventajoso concepto que tiene hecho no solo de los talentos de V. S. sino tambien de su dulzura, templanza y madurez, bien patentes en sus obras.

Asi me encarga manifestarselo á V. S. dicho cuerpo, justo apreciador no menos de las qualidades recomendables del corazon que de las luces superiores; y no duda que bien persuadida la penetracion de V. S. de quan importante és en un estado la paz y concordia religiosa entre los vasallos de un mismo soberano, y aun para la prosperidad publica, continuarà en dispensar á los Catolicos su favor; confiando que no podrà esto dexar de ser acepto á S. M. B. á quien siempre permaneceràn ellos acreditando, como hasta aqui su inviolable lealtad y debida obediencia asi por las maximas y preceptos de nuestra religion, como por reconocimiento a la benignidad y proteccion con que àquel Monarca, y el Parlamento acaban de tratar el ano pasado á sus hermanos de Inglaterra.

Mis sentimientos son enteramente conformes á los expresados. Con ellos me ofrezco muy de veras á la obediencia de V. S. anhelando ocasiones en que mostrarle mi singular estimacion y afecto.

Dios guarde á V. S. muchos años. Madrid 19 de Junio de 1779. B. L. M. de V. S. su seguro servidor,

D^n^. Pedro Rodriguez de Campomanes.

S^r^. D^or^. Guillermo Robertson, Edimburgo.[1]]

[1] I am indebted to a friend for a literal translation of the above letter. In transcribing it for the press, I have taken no liberty with his version, but that of retrenching a few circuitous modes of expression, which did not seem to accord with the idiom of our language.

Sir,—By accounts from the gentleman who is at the head of the few Catholics residing in the city of Edinburgh, it has been known here, how singularly humane and benevolent you have shewn yourself towards them, in the meetings and deliberations of the Protestant clergy of Scotland; exposing yourself, perhaps, by that means, to injuries and insults, in the midst of the persecutions raised against them in the beginning of last February.

Your laudable conduct in these critical circumstances will procure you the greatest credit and esteem in the opinion of all men of moderation, probity, and discernment; being highly characteristical of that temperate and mild philosophy which has distinguished wise men in the most enlightened ages.

Such, I can assure you, was the impression which this intelligence made on the Royal Academy of History, which felt a sincere complacency on hearing of the kind and generous offices of its learned associate in favour of our afflicted brethren;—confirmed anew by this proof, in the opinion which it had formed from your works, not only of your talents, but also of your meekness, moderation, and prudence.

The Academy, which knows how to appreciate the valuable qualities of the heart, as well as extraordinary talents and learning, charges me to convey to you these sentiments; and it doubts not, but, from a conviction of what importance to the prosperity of a state, must be a religious peace and concord between the subjects of a common sovereign, you will continue to extend your protection to the Catholics of Scotland; in the confidence that this cannot fail to be agreeable to his Britannic Majesty, to whom they will always evince, as they have hitherto done, their inviolable loyalty and due obedience; no less in conformity to the maxims and precepts of our religion, than from gratitude for the kindness and indulgence which their brethren in England received last year from that Monarch and from Parliament.

My private sentiments are entirely the same, and with these I beg leave to express to you my earnest wishes for renewed opportunities of manifesting to you my particular esteem and regard.

God preserve you many years, &c. &c.

NOTE O, p. 196.

The active part which Dr. Robertson took in the foundation of the Society before which the foregoing Memoir was read, is so well known to all the members, that it did not appear necessary to recall it to their recollection. For the information of others, however, it may be proper to mention, that the first idea of this establishment, and of the plan adopted in its formation, was suggested by him; and that without his powerful co-operation, there is little probability that the design would ever have been carried into effect.

The zeal with which he promoted the execution of the Statistical Accounts of Scotland, has been gratefully acknowledged by Sir John Sinclair; and I have frequently heard Dr. Robertson express, in the strongest terms, his sense of the obligations which the public lay under to the projector and conductor of that great national work; and the pride with which he reflected on the monument which was thus raised to the information and liberality of the Scottish clergy.

From the following letters, it would appear that he had contributed some aid to the exertions of those who so honourably distinguished themselves a few years ago in the Parliamentary discussions about the African Trade. His own sentiments on that subject were eloquently stated thirty years before, in the only sermon which he ever published.

FROM MR. WILBERFORCE TO DR. ROBERTSON.

LONDON, 25*th January* 1788.

SIR,—I shall not begin by apologizing to you for now presuming to intrude myself on you without introduction, but with condemning myself for not having done it sooner. The subject which is the occasion of my troubling you with this letter, that of the Slave Trade, is one on which I am persuaded our sentiments coincide, and in calling forth your good offices in such a cause, I trust you will think that whilst I incur, I also bestow an obligation. What I have to request is, that you will have the goodness to communicate to me such facts and observations as may be useful to me in the important task I have undertaken, of bringing forward into Parliamentary discussion, the situation of that much injured part of the species, the poor Negroes. In common with the rest of my countrymen, I have to complain that I am under the necessity of betaking myself directly to you for the information I solicit; an application to my bookseller ought to have supplied it: but if there be some ground of charge against you for having failed in your engagements to the public in this particular, it is the rather incumbent on you to attend to the claim of an individual; consider it as a sort of expiation for your offence, and rejoice if so weighty a crime comes off with so light a punishment. Though the main object I have in view, is the prevention of all further exports of slaves from Africa, yet their state in the West Indies, and the most practical mode of meliorating it, the effects that might follow from this change of system in all its extended and complicated connexions and relations, both in Africa and the Western World, and this not only in our own case, but in those of other European nations, who might be induced to follow our example; all these come into question, and constitute a burthen too heavy for one of powers like mine to bear, without my calling for help where it

may be so abundantly afforded; let me add also, that I should be extremely thankful for any intelligence respecting the institutions of the Jesuits in Paraguay, which it has long struck me, might prove a most useful subject of investigation to any one who would form a plan for the civilisation of Africa. Allow me to add, that I shall wait to hear from you with anxiety, because the business must be brought into the house soon after the meeting. I will not waste your valuable time by excuses for this letter, if they are necessary, but once more I will venture to assure myself that you will not think them so. I have the honour to be, with great respect, Sir, your most obedient and humble servant,

W. WILBERFORCE.

FROM MR. WILBERFORCE TO DR. ROBERTSON.

HAMPSTEAD, *20th February* 1788.

SIR,—I have been honoured with your packets by the post, as well as with your Sermon, and return you my sincerest thanks for your very obliging attention to my request; I am fully sensible to the value of the favourable sentiments you express concerning me, and as one concession always produces a new demand, perhaps you will not be surprised at my now taking the liberty of intimating a hope that I may consider what has passed as constituting a sort of acquaintance between us, which it will give me particular pleasure to indulge an expectation of cultivating, when any opportunity shall allow.—I remain, with great respect and esteem, Sir, your obliged and faithful servant,

W. WILBERFORCE.

NOTE P, p. 199.

Dr. Robertson's second son is now Lieutenant-Colonel of the 92d Regiment. His name is repeatedly mentioned with distinction in the *History of Lord Cornwallis's Military Operations in India*, particularly in the General Orders after the siege of Nundydroog, where he commanded in the European flank company that led the assault. The following paragraph from Colonel Dirom's *Narrative* contains a testimony to his conduct on this occasion, which would have been grateful to the feelings of his father had he survived to peruse it.

"The carnage which must have ensued in clearing the fort of the enemy, was prevented partly by a number of the garrison escaping by ropes and ladders over a low part of the wall, but chiefly by the exertions of Captain Robertson, who, seeing the place was carried, turned all his attention to preserving order, and preventing the unnecessary effusion of blood. To his humanity the bukshey and killedar owed their lives, and of the garrison there were only about forty men killed and wounded."

NOTE Q, p. 201.

This request was conveyed to Dr. Robertson by Mr. Dalzel, and was received by him with much sensibility, as a mark of the esteem and approbation of a Society over which he had presided for thirty years.

I neglected to mention in a former Note the Latin Discourses which Dr. Robertson pronounced annually before the University, in compliance with the established practice among his predecessors in office. The *first* of these was read on the 3d

of February 1763. Its object was to recommend the study of Classical Learning, and it contained, among a variety of other splendid passages, a beautiful panegyric on the Stoical Philosophy. His *second* Discourse, (9th of February 1764,) consisted chiefly of Moral and Literary observations, adapted to the particular circumstances of youth. My friend Mr. Dalzel, who has lately perused these Latin Manuscripts with care, observes of this Oration, that the style is uncommonly elegant and impressive, and possesses all the distinguishing characteristics of Dr. Robertson's English compositions."

A *third* Discourse was pronounced on February 14, 1765, and a *fourth* on February 20, 1766. The subject of both is the same; the question concerning the comparative advantages of Public and Private Education. The execution is such as might be expected from the abilities of the Author, exerted on a topic on which he was so eminently fitted to decide, not only by his professional situation and habits, but by an extensive and discriminating knowledge of the world.

These annual discourses (which never failed to produce a strong and happy impression on the minds of his young hearers) he was compelled, after this period, to discontinue by his avocations as an author, and by other engagements which he conceived to be of still greater importance. It is indeed astonishing that he was able to devote so much time as he did to his academical duties, particularly when we consider that all his works were at first committed to writing in his own hand, and that he seldom, if ever, attempted to dictate to an *amanuensis*. It may be gratifying to those to whom the literary habits of authors are an object of curiosity to add, that his practice in composition was (according to his own statement in a letter to Mr. Strahan) "to finish as near perfection as he was able, so that his subsequent alterations were inconsiderable."

ACCOUNT

OF

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

THOMAS REID, D.D., F.R.S.E.

LATE PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW.

[READ AT DIFFERENT MEETINGS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH, IN THE YEAR 1802.]

ACCOUNT

OF

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

THOMAS REID, D.D.

SECTION I.

FROM DR. REID'S BIRTH TILL THE DATE OF HIS LATEST PUBLICATION.

THE life of which I am now to present to the Royal Society a short account, although it fixes an era in the history of modern philosophy, was uncommonly barren of those incidents which furnish materials for biography. It was spent in the obscurity of a learned retreat, remote from the pursuits of ambition, and with little solicitude about literary fame,—unembellished even by that epistolary intercourse with the world, which has formed the relaxation of many studious men, and in which they have themselves transmitted to posterity the most faithful and pleasing portraits of their own characters. After the agitation, however, of the political convulsions which Europe has witnessed for a course of years, the simple record of such a life may derive an interest even from its uniformity, and, when contrasted with the events of the passing scene, may lead the thoughts to some views of human nature, on which it is not ungrateful to repose.

Thomas Reid, late Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow, was born on the 26th of April 1710,

at Strachan, in Kincardineshire, a country parish situated about twenty miles from Aberdeen, on the north side of the Grampian Mountains.

His father, the Reverend Lewis Reid, was minister of this parish for fifty years. He was a clergyman, according to his son's account of him, respected by all who knew him, for his piety, prudence, and benevolence; inheriting from his ancestors (most of whom, from the time of the Protestant establishment, had been ministers of the Church of Scotland) that purity and simplicity of manners which became his station, and a love of letters which, without attracting the notice of the world, amused his leisure, and dignified his retirement.

For some generations before his time, a propensity to literature, and to the learned professions,—a propensity which, when it has once become characteristical of a race, is peculiarly apt to be propagated by the influence of early impressions and associations,—may be traced in several individuals among his kindred. One of his ancestors, James Reid, was the first minister of Banchory-Ternan after the Reformation, and transmitted to four sons a predilection for those studious habits which formed his own happiness. He was himself a younger son of Mr. Reid of Pitfoddels, a gentleman of a very ancient and respectable family in the county of Aberdeen.

James Reid was succeeded as minister of Banchory by his son Robert. Another son, Thomas, rose to considerable distinction both as a philosopher and a poet, and seems to have wanted neither ability nor inclination to turn his attainments to the best advantage. After travelling over Europe, and maintaining, as was the custom of his age, public disputations in several universities, he collected into a volume the theses and dissertations which had been the subjects of his literary contests; and also published some Latin poems, which may be found in the collection entitled, *Delitiæ Poëtarum Scotorum.* On his return to his native country, he fixed his residence in London, where he was appointed Secretary in the Greek and Latin tongues to King James the First of England, and lived in habits of intimacy with some of the most distinguished charac-

ters of that period. Little more, I believe, is known of Thomas Reid's history, excepting that he bequeathed to the Marischal College of Aberdeen, a curious collection of books and manuscripts, with a fund for establishing a salary to a librarian.

Alexander Reid, the third son, was physician to King Charles the First, and published several books on surgery and medicine. The fortune he acquired in the course of his practice was considerable, and enabled him (beside many legacies to his relations and friends) to leave various lasting and honourable memorials, both of his benevolence and of his attachment to letters.

A fourth son, whose name was Adam, translated into English Buchanan's *History of Scotland.* Of this translation, which was never published, there is a manuscript copy in the possession of the University of Glasgow.

A grandson of Robert, the eldest of these sons, was the third minister of Banchory after the Reformation, and was great-grandfather of Thomas Reid, the subject of this memoir.[1]

The particulars hitherto mentioned are stated on the authority of some short memorandums written by Dr. Reid a few weeks before his death.* In consequence of a suggestion of his friend Dr. Gregory, he had resolved to amuse himself with collecting such facts as his papers or memory could supply, with respect to his life and the progress of his studies; but, unfortunately, before he had fairly entered on the subject, his design was interrupted by his last illness. If he had lived to complete it, I might have entertained hopes of presenting to the public some details with respect to the history of his opinions and speculations on those important subjects to which he dedicated his talents,—the most interesting of all articles in the biography of a philosopher, and of which it is to be lamented that so few authentic records are to be found in the annals of letters. All the information, however, which I have derived from these notes, is exhausted in the foregoing pages; and I must content myself, in the continuation of my narrative,

[1] See Note A.

* [For sundry additional anecdotes in regard to Reid's family history, see the footnotes on Notes A and F of this *Memoir*, in the edition of his *Collected Works*, pp. 35, 36, 38.]

with those indirect aids which tradition, and the recollection of a few old acquaintances, afford, added to what I myself have learned from Dr. Reid's conversation, or collected from a careful perusal of his writings.

His mother, Margaret Gregory, was a daughter of David Gregory, Esq. of Kinnairdie, in Banffshire, elder brother of James Gregory, the inventor of the reflecting telescope, and the antagonist of Huygens. She was one of twenty-nine children; the most remarkable of whom was David Gregory, Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford, and an intimate friend of Sir Isaac Newton. Two of her younger brothers were at the same time Professors of Mathematics, the one at St. Andrews, the other at Edinburgh, and were the first persons who taught the Newtonian philosophy in our northern universities. The hereditary worth and genius which have so long distinguished, and which still distinguish, the descendants of this memorable family, are well known to all who have turned their attention to Scottish biography; but it is not known so generally, that through the female line, the same characteristical endowments have been conspicuous in various instances; and that to the other monuments which illustrate the race of the Gregories, is to be added *the Philosophy of Reid.*

With respect to the earlier part of Dr. Reid's life, all that I have been able to learn amounts to this:—That after two years spent at the parish-school of Kincardine, he was sent to Aberdeen, where he had the advantage of prosecuting his classical studies under an able and diligent teacher; that, about the age of twelve or thirteen, he was entered as a student in Marischal College; and that his master in philosophy, for three years, was Dr. George Turnbull, who afterwards attracted some degree of notice as an author, particularly by a book entitled, *Principles of Moral Philosophy*, and by a voluminous treatise (long ago forgotten) on Ancient Painting.[1] The sessions of the College were, at that time, very short, and the education (according to Dr. Reid's own account) slight and superficial.

It does not appear from the information which I have received,

[1] See Note B.

that he gave any early indications of future eminence. His industry, however, and modesty, were conspicuous from his childhood; and it was foretold of him, by the schoolmaster, who initiated him in the first principles of learning, "That he would turn out to be a man of good and well-wearing parts; a prediction which touched, not unhappily, on that capacity of "patient thought" which so peculiarly characterized his philosophical genius.

His residence at the University was prolonged beyond the usual term, in consequence of his appointment to the office of Librarian, which had been endowed by one of his ancestors about a century before.* The situation was acceptable to him, as it afforded an opportunity of indulging his passion for study, and united the charms of a learned society with the quiet of an academical retreat.

During this period he formed an intimacy with John Stewart, afterwards Professor of Mathematics in Marischal College, and author of a *Commentary on Newton's Quadrature of Curves.* His predilection for mathematical pursuits was confirmed and strengthened by this connexion. I have often heard him mention it with much pleasure, while he recollected the ardour with which they both prosecuted these fascinating studies, and the lights which they imparted mutually to each other in their first perusal of the *Principia,* at a time when a knowledge of the Newtonian discoveries was only to be acquired in the writings of their illustrious author.

In 1736, Dr. Reid resigned his office of Librarian, and accompanied Mr. Stewart on an excursion to England. They visited together London, Oxford, and Cambridge, and were introduced to the acquaintance of many persons of the first literary eminence. His relation to Dr. David Gregory procured him a ready access to Martin Folkes, whose house concentrated the most interesting objects which the metropolis had to offer to his curiosity. At Cambridge he saw Dr. Bentley, who delighted him with his learning, and amused him with his vanity; and enjoyed repeatedly the conversation of the blind mathematician, Saunderson,—a phenomenon in the history of

* [See Reid's *Collected Works*, footnote*, p. 38, b.]

the human mind, to which he has referred more than once in his philosophical speculations.

With the learned and amiable man who was his companion in this journey, he maintained an uninterrupted friendship till 1766, when Mr. Stewart died of a malignant fever. His death was accompanied with circumstances deeply afflicting to Dr. Reid's sensibility, the same disorder proving fatal to his wife and daughter, both of whom were buried with him in one grave.

In 1737, Dr. Reid was presented, by the King's College of Aberdeen, to the living of New-Machar in the same county, but unfortunately the minds of his parishioners were to such a degree inflamed against him, (partly by the aversion then so prevalent in Scotland to the law of patronage, and partly by the intemperate zeal of one of his predecessors,) that, in the first discharge of his clerical functions, he had not only to encounter the most violent opposition, but was exposed to personal danger. His unwearied attention, however, to the duties of his office, the mildness and forbearance of his temper, and the active spirit of his humanity, soon overcame all these prejudices; and, not many years afterwards, when he was called to a different situation, the same persons who had suffered themselves to be so far misled, as to take a share in the outrages against him, followed him, on his departure, with their blessings and tears.

Dr. Reid's popularity at New-Machar (as I am informed by the respectable clergyman[1] who now holds that living) increased greatly after his marriage, in 1740, with Elizabeth, daughter of his uncle, Dr. George Reid, physician in London. The accommodating manners of this excellent woman, and her good offices among the sick and necessitous, are still remembered with gratitude, and so endeared the family to the neighbourhood, that its removal was regarded as a general misfortune. The simple and affecting language in which some old men expressed themselves on this subject, in conversing with the present minister, deserves to be recorded. "We fought *against* Dr. Reid when he came, and would have fought *for* him when he went away."

[1] The Rev. William Stronach.

In some notes relative to the earlier part of his history, which have been kindly communicated to me by the Rev. Mr. Davidson, minister of Rayne, it is mentioned as a proof of his uncommon modesty and diffidence, that long after he became minister of New-Machar, he was accustomed, from a distrust in his own powers, to preach the sermons of Dr. Tillotson and of Dr. Evans. I have heard also, through other channels, that he had neglected the practice of composition to a more than ordinary degree in the earlier part of his studies. The fact is curious, when contrasted with that ease, perspicuity, and purity of style, which he afterwards attained. From some information, however, which has been lately transmitted to me by one of his nearest relations, I have reason to believe that the number of original discourses which he wrote, while a country clergyman, was not inconsiderable.

The satisfaction of his own mind was probably, at this period, a more powerful incentive to his philosophical researches than the hope of being able to instruct the world as an author. But whatever his views were, one thing is certain, that during his residence at New-Machar, the greater part of his time was spent in the most intense study, more particularly in a careful examination of the laws of external Perception, and of the other principles which form the groundwork of human knowledge. His chief relaxations were gardening and botany, to both of which pursuits he retained his attachment even in old age.

A paper which he published in the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society of London, for the year 1748, affords some light with respect to the progress of his speculations about this period. It is entitled, *An Essay on Quantity, occasioned by reading a Treatise, in which Simple and Compound Ratios are applied to Virtue and Merit*, and shews plainly by its contents, that although he had not yet entirely relinquished the favourite researches of his youth, he was beginning to direct his thoughts to other objects.

The treatise alluded to in the title of this paper, was manifestly the *Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, by Dr. Hutcheson of Glasgow. According to this very

ingenious writer, the *moment* of public good produced by an individual, depending partly on his *benevolence*, and partly on his *ability*, the relation between these different moral ideas may be expressed in the technical form of algebraists, by saying, that the first is in the compound proportion of the two others. Hence Dr. Hutcheson infers, that "the *benevolence* of an agent (which in this system is synonymous with his *moral merit*) is proportional to a fraction, having the moment of good for the numerator, and the ability of the agent for the denominator." * Various other examples of a similar nature occur in the same work, and are stated with a gravity not altogether worthy of the author. It is probable that they were intended merely as *illustrations* of his general reasonings, not as *media* of investigation for the discovery of new conclusions; but they appeared to Dr. Reid to be an innovation which it was of importance to resist, on account of the tendency it might have (by confounding the evidence of different branches of science) to retard the progress of knowledge. The very high reputation which Dr. Hutcheson then possessed in the Universities of Scotland, added to the recent attempts of Pitcairn and Cheyne to apply Mathematical reasoning to medicine, would bestow, it is likely, an interest on Dr. Reid's *Essay* at the time of its publication, which it can scarcely be expected to possess at present. Many of the observations, however, which it contains, are acute and original; and all of them are expressed with that clearness and precision so conspicuous in his subsequent compositions. The circumstance which renders a subject susceptible of mathematical consideration, is accurately stated, and the proper province of that science defined in such a manner, as sufficiently to expose the absurdity of those abuses of its technical phraseology which were at that time prevalent. From some passages in it, there is, I think, ground for concluding that the author's reading had not been very extensive previous to this period. The enumeration, in particular, which he has given of the different kinds of *proper quantity*, affords

* [*Inquiry*, Treat. II. sect. iii.—See above, *Works*, Vol. VII. p. 230, *seq.* Reid's *Essay on Quantity* appears in the collective edition of his *Works*, pp. 715-719.]

a proof that he was not acquainted with the refined yet sound disquisitions concerning the nature of *number* and of *proportion*, which had appeared almost a century before in the *Mathematical Lectures* of Dr. Barrow, nor with the remarks on the same subject, introduced by Dr. Clarke in one of his controversial *Letters* addressed to Leibnitz.

In the same paper, Dr. Reid takes occasion to offer some reflections on the dispute between the *Newtonians* and *Leibnitians* concerning the measure of forces. The fundamental idea on which these reflections proceed, is just and important; and it leads to the correction of an error, committed very generally by the partisans of both opinions, that of mistaking a question concerning the comparative advantages of two *definitions*, for a difference of statement with respect to a *physical fact*. It must, I think, be acknowledged, at the same time, that the whole merits of the controversy are not here exhausted; and that the honour of placing this very subtle and abstruse question in a point of view calculated to reconcile completely the contending parties, was reserved for M. D'Alembert. To have fallen short of the success which attended the inquiries of that eminent man, on a subject so congenial to his favourite habits of study, will not reflect any discredit on the powers of Dr. Reid's mind, in the judgment of those who are at all acquainted with the history of this celebrated discussion.

In 1752, the Professors of *King's College* elected Dr. Reid *Professor of Philosophy*, "in testimony of the high opinion they had formed of his learning and abilities." Of the particular plan which he followed in his academical lectures, while he held this office, I have not been able to obtain any satisfactory account;* but the department of science which was assigned to him by the general system of education in that university, was abundantly extensive,—comprehending Mathematics and Physics, as well as Logic and Ethics. A similar system was pursued formerly in the other universities of Scotland,—the same

* [But see the information communicated by Dr. Knight, Professor of Natural Philosophy in Marischal College, as given in the edition of Reid's *Collected Works*, pp. 38, 39.]

individual then conducting his pupils through all those branches of knowledge which are now appropriated to different teachers. And where the professor happened fortunately to combine those various accomplishments which distinguished Dr. Reid in so remarkable a degree, it cannot be doubted that the unity and comprehensiveness of method, of which such academical courses admitted, must necessarily have possessed important advantages over that more minute subdivision of literary labour which has since been introduced. But as public establishments ought to adapt themselves to what is ordinary, rather than to what is possible, it is not surprising that experience should have gradually suggested an arrangement more suitable to the narrow limits which commonly circumscribe human genius.

Soon after Dr. Reid's removal to Aberdeen, he projected (in conjunction with his friend Dr. John Gregory) a Literary Society, which subsisted for many years, and which seems to have had the happiest effects in awakening and directing that spirit of philosophical research, which has since reflected so much lustre on the north of Scotland. The meetings of this society were held weekly, and afforded the members (beside the advantages to be derived from a mutual communication of their sentiments on the common objects of their pursuit) an opportunity of subjecting their intended publications to the test of friendly criticism. The number of valuable works which issued nearly about the same time, from individuals connected with this institution, more particularly the writings of Reid, Gregory, Campbell, Beattie, and Gerard, furnish the best panegyric on the enlightened views of those under whose direction it was originally formed.

Among these works, the most original and profound was unquestionably the *Inquiry into the Human Mind*, published by Dr. Reid in 1764. The plan appears to have been conceived, and the subject deeply meditated, by the author long before; but it is doubtful whether his modesty would have ever permitted him to present to the world the fruits of his solitary studies, without the encouragement which he received from the general acquiescence of his associates, in the most important conclusions to which he had been led.

From a passage in the dedication, it would seem, that the speculations which terminated in these conclusions had commenced as early as the year 1739, at which period the publication of Mr. Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* induced him, for the first time, (as he himself informs us,) "to call in question the principles commonly received with regard to the human understanding." In his *Essays on the Intellectual Powers*, [1785,] he acknowledges, that, in his youth, he had, without examination, admitted the established opinions on which Mr. Hume's system of Scepticism was raised, and that it was the consequences which these opinions seemed to involve, which roused his suspicions concerning their truth. "If I may presume," says he, "to speak my own sentiments, I once believed *the doctrine of Ideas* so firmly, as to embrace the whole of Berkeley's system along with it; till finding other consequences to follow from it, which gave me more uneasiness than the want of a material world, it came into my mind more than forty years ago, to put the question, *What evidence have I for this doctrine, that all the objects of my knowledge are ideas in my own mind?* From that time to the present, I have been candidly and impartially, as I think, seeking for the evidence of this principle, but can find none, excepting the authority of philosophers."*

In following the train of Dr. Reid's researches, this last extract merits attention, as it contains an explicit avowal, on his own part, that at one period of his life he had been led, by Berkeley's reasonings, to abandon the belief of the existence of *Matter*. The avowal does honour to his candour, and the fact reflects no discredit on his sagacity. The truth is, that this article of the Berkeleian system, however contrary to the conclusions of a sounder philosophy, was the error of no common mind. Considered in contrast with that theory of Materialism, which the excellent author was anxious to supplant, it possessed important advantages, not only in its tendency, but in its scientific consistency; and it afforded a proof, wherever it met with a favourable reception, of an understanding superior to

* [*Intellectual Powers*, Essay II. chap. x.—*Coll. Works*, p. 283.]

those casual associations, which, in the apprehensions of most men, blend indissolubly the phenomena of thought with the objects of external perception. It is recorded as a saying of M. Turgot, (whose philosophical opinions in some important points approached very nearly to those of Dr. Reid,)[1] that "he who had never doubted of the existence of Matter, might be assured he had no turn for Metaphysical disquisitions."

As the refutation of Mr. Hume's Sceptical theory was the great and professed object of Dr. Reid's *Inquiry*, he was anxious, before taking the field as a controversial writer, to guard against the danger of misapprehending or misrepresenting the meaning of his adversary, by submitting his reasonings to Mr. Hume's private examination. With this view he availed himself of the good offices of Dr. Blair, with whom both he and Mr. Hume had long lived in habits of friendship. The communications which he at first transmitted, consisted only of detached parts of the work, and appear evidently, from a correspondence which I have perused, to have conveyed a very imperfect idea of his general system. In one of Mr. Hume's letters to Dr. Blair, he betrays some want of his usual good humour, in looking forward to his new antagonist. "I wish," says he, "that the parsons would confine themselves to their old occupation of worrying one another, and leave philosophers to argue with temper, moderation, and good manners." After Mr. Hume, however, had read the manuscript, he addressed himself directly to the author, in terms so candid and liberal, that it would be unjust to his memory to withhold from the public so pleasing a memorial of his character.

"By Dr. Blair's means I have been favoured with the perusal of your performance, which I have read with great pleasure and attention. It is certainly very rare, that a piece so deeply philosophical is wrote with so much spirit, and affords so much entertainment to the reader; though I must still regret the disadvantages under which I read it, as I never had the whole performance at once before me, and could not be able fully to compare one part with another. To this reason, chiefly, I

[1] See, in particular, the article *Existence* in the *Encyclopédie*.

ascribe some obscurities, which, in spite of your short analysis or abstract, still seem to hang over your system. For I must do you the justice to own, that when I enter into your ideas, no man appears to express himself with greater perspicuity than you do; a talent which, above all others, is requisite in that species of literature which you have cultivated. There are some objections which I would willingly propose to the chapter, *Of Sight*, did I not suspect that they proceed from my not sufficiently understanding it; and I am the more confirmed in this suspicion, as Dr. Blair tells me, that the former objections I made had been derived chiefly from that cause. I shall, therefore, forbear till the whole can be before me, and shall not at present propose any farther difficulties to your reasonings. I shall only say, that if you have been able to clear up these abstruse and important subjects, instead of being mortified, I shall be so vain as to pretend to a share of the praise; and shall think that my errors, by having at least some coherence, had led you to make a more strict review of my principles, which were the common ones, and to perceive their futility.

"As I was desirous to be of some use to you, I kept a watchful eye all along over your style; but it is really so correct, and so good English, that I found not anything worth the remarking. There is only one passage in this chapter, where you make use of the phrase *hinder to do*, instead of *hinder from doing*, which is the English one; but I could not find the passage when I sought for it. You may judge how unexceptionable the whole appeared to me, when I could remark so small a blemish. I beg my compliments to my friendly adversaries, Dr. Campbell and Dr. Gerard, and also to Dr. Gregory, whom I suspect to be of the same disposition, though he has not openly declared himself such."

Of the particular doctrines contained in Dr. Reid's *Inquiry*, I do not think it necessary here to attempt any abstract; nor indeed do his speculations (conducted as they were in strict conformity to the rules of inductive philosophizing) afford a subject for the same species of rapid outline, which is so useful in facilitating the study of a merely hypothetical theory. Their great

object was to record and to classify the phenomena which the operations of the human mind present to those who reflect carefully on the subjects of their consciousness; and of such a history, it is manifest, that no abridgment could be offered with advantage. Some reflections on the peculiar plan adopted by the author, and on the general scope of his researches in this department of science, will afterwards find a more convenient place, when I shall have finished my account of his subsequent publications.

The idea of prosecuting the study of the human Mind, on a plan analogous to that which had been so successfully adopted in Physics by the followers of Lord Bacon, if not first conceived by Dr. Reid, was, at least, first carried successfully into execution in his writings. An attempt had long before been announced by Mr. Hume, in the title page of his *Treatise of Human Nature*, to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects; and some admirable remarks are made in the introduction to that work, on the errors into which his predecessors had been betrayed by the spirit of hypothesis; and yet it is now very generally admitted, that the whole of his own system rests on a principle for which there is no evidence but the authority of philosophers; and it is certain, that in no part of it has he aimed to investigate by a systematical analysis, those general principles of our constitution which can alone afford a synthetical explanation of its complicated phenomena.

I have often been disposed to think, that Mr. Hume's inattention to those rules of philosophizing which it was his professed intention to exemplify, was owing in part to some indistinctness in his notions concerning their import. It does not appear that, in the earlier part of his studies, he had paid much attention to the models of investigation exhibited in the writings of Newton and of his successors; and that he was by no means aware of the extraordinary merits of Bacon as a philosopher, nor of the influence which his writings have had on the subsequent progress of physical discovery, is demonstrated by the cold and qualified encomium which is bestowed

on his genius in one of the most elaborate passages of the *History of England.*

In these respects Dr. Reid possessed important advantages; familiarized from his early years to those experimental inquiries, which, in the course of the two last centuries, have exalted Natural Philosophy to the dignity of a science, and determined strongly, by the peculiar bent of his genius, to connect every step in the progress of discovery with the history of the human Mind. The influence of the general views opened in the *Novum Organon,* may be traced in almost every page of his writings; and, indeed, the circumstance by which these are so strongly and characteristically distinguished is, that they exhibit the first systematical attempt to exemplify, in the study of human nature, the same plan of investigation which conducted Newton to the properties of light, and to the law of gravitation. It is from a steady adherence to this plan, and not from the superiority of his inventive powers, that he claims to himself any merit as a philosopher; and he seems even willing (with a modesty approaching to a fault) to abandon the praise of what is commonly called *genius,* to the authors of the systems which he was anxious to refute. "It is genius," he observes in one passage, "and not the want of it, that adulterates philosophy, and fills it with error and false theory. A creative imagination disdains the mean offices of digging for a foundation, of removing rubbish, and carrying materials; leaving these servile employments to the drudges in science, it plans a design and raises a fabric. Invention supplies materials where they are wanting, and fancy adds colouring and every befitting ornament. The work pleases the eye, and wants nothing but solidity and a good foundation. It seems even to vie with the works of nature, till some succeeding architect blows it into ruins, and builds as goodly a fabric of his own in its place."

"Success in an inquiry of this kind," he observes farther, "it is not in human power to command; but perhaps it is possible, by caution and humility, to avoid error and delusion. The labyrinth may be too intricate, and the thread too fine, to be traced through all its windings; but if we stop where we can

trace it no farther, and secure the ground we have gained, there is no harm done ; a quicker eye may in time trace it farther."*

The unassuming language with which Dr. Reid endeavours to remove the prejudices naturally excited by a new attempt to philosophize on so unpromising, and hitherto so ungrateful a subject, recalls to our recollection those passages in which Lord Bacon—filled as his own imagination was with the future grandeur of the fabric founded by his hand—bespeaks the indulgence of his readers for an enterprise apparently so hopeless and presumptuous. The apology he offers for himself, when compared with the height to which the structure of physical knowledge has since attained, may perhaps have some effect in attracting a more general attention to pursuits still more immediately interesting to mankind ; and, at any rate, it forms the best comment on the prophetic suggestions in which Dr. Reid occasionally indulges himself concerning the future progress of moral speculation.

" Si homines per tanta annorum spatia viam veram inveniendi et colendi scientias tenuissent, nec tamen ulterius progredi potuissent, audax procul dubio et temeraria foret opinio, posse rem in ulterius provehi. Quod si in *via* ipsa erratum sit, atque hominum opera in iis consumpta in quibus minime oportebat, sequitur ex eo, non in rebus ipsis difficultatem oriri, quæ potestatis nostræ non sunt ; sed in intellectu humano, ejusque usu et applicatione, quæ res remedium et medicinam suscipit." [1]—" De nobis ipsis silemus : de re autem quæ agitur, petimus : ut homines eam non opinionem, sed opus esse cogitent ; ac pro certo habeant, non sectæ nos alicujus, aut placiti, sed utilitatis et amplitudinis humanæ fundamenta moliri. Præterea, ut bene sperent : neque Instaurationem nostram ut quiddam infinitum et ultra mortale fingant, et animo concipiant ; quum revera sit infiniti erroris finis et terminus legitimus." [2]

The impression produced on the minds of speculative men by the publication of Dr. Reid's *Inquiry*, was fully as great as

* [*Inquiry*, &c., Introd. sect. ii. ; *Coll. Works*, p. 99.]

[1] *Nov. Org.*, Aph. xciv.

[2] *Instaur. Mag.*, Præfat.

could be expected from the nature of his undertaking. It was a work neither addressed to the multitude, nor level to their comprehension; and the freedom with which it canvassed opinions sanctioned by the highest authorities, was ill calculated to conciliate the favour of the learned. A few, however, habituated, like the author, to the analytical researches of the Newtonian school, soon perceived the extent of his views, and recognised in his pages the genuine spirit and language of inductive investigation. Among the members of this University, Mr. Ferguson* was the first to applaud Dr. Reid's success, warmly recommending to his pupils a steady prosecution of the same plan, as the only effectual method of ascertaining the general principles of the human frame; and illustrating happily, by his own profound and eloquent disquisitions, the application of such studies to the conduct of the understanding, and to the great concerns of life. I recollect too, when I attended (about the year 1771) the lectures of the late Mr. Russell,† to have heard high encomiums on the philosophy of Reid, in the course of those comprehensive discussions concerning the objects and the rules of experimental science, with which he so agreeably diversified the particular doctrines of Physics. Nor must I omit this opportunity of paying a tribute to the memory of my old friend Mr. Stevenson, then Professor of *Logic*, whose candid mind, at the age of seventy, gave a welcome reception to a system subversive of the theories which he had taught for forty years, and whose zeal for the advancement of knowledge prompted him, when his career was almost finished, to undertake the laborious task of new-modelling that useful compilation of elementary instruction, to which a singular diffidence of his own powers limited his literary exertions.

It is with no common feelings of respect and of gratitude, that I now recall the names of those to whom I owe my first attachment to these studies, and the happiness of a liberal occupation superior to the more aspiring aims of a servile ambition.

From the University of Glasgow, Dr. Reid's *Inquiry* received

* [Professor of *Natural Philosophy* from 1759, and of *Moral Philosophy* from 1769.]

† [Professor of *Natural Philosophy*.]

a still more substantial testimony of approbation, the author having been invited, in 1764, [the very year of publication,] by that learned body, to the professorship of *Moral Philosophy*, then vacant by the resignation of Mr. Smith. The preferment was in many respects advantageous, affording an income considerably greater than he enjoyed at Aberdeen, and enabling him to concentrate to his favourite objects, that attention which had been hitherto distracted by the miscellaneous nature of his academical engagements. It was not, however, without reluctance that he consented to tear himself from a spot where he had so long been fastening his roots; and, much as he loved the society in which he passed the remainder of his days, I am doubtful if, in his mind, it compensated the sacrifice of earlier habits and connexions.

Abstracting from the charm of local attachment, the University of Glasgow, at the time when Dr. Reid was adopted as one of its members, presented strong attractions to reconcile him to his change of situation. Robert Simson, the great restorer of ancient geometry, was still alive; and, although far advanced in years, preserved unimpaired his ardour in study, his relish for social relaxation, and his amusing singularities of humour. Dr. Moor combined, with a gaiety and a levity foreign to this climate, the profound attainments of a scholar and of a mathematician. In Dr. Black, to whose fortunate genius a new world of science had just opened, Reid acknowledged an instructor and a guide, and met a simplicity of manners congenial to his own. The Wilsons (both father and son) were formed to attach his heart by the similarity of their scientific pursuits, and an entire sympathy with his views and sentiments. Nor was he less delighted with the good-humoured opposition which his opinions never failed to encounter in the acuteness of Millar, then in the vigour of youthful genius, and warm from the lessons of a different school. Dr. Leechman, the friend and biographer of Hutcheson, was the official head of the College, and added the weight of a venerable name to the reputation of a community which he had once adorned in a more active station.[1]

[1] See Note C.

Animated by the zeal of such associates, and by the busy scenes which his new residence presented in every department of useful industry, Dr. Reid entered on his functions at Glasgow with an ardour not common at the period of life which he had now attained. His researches concerning the human Mind, and the principles of Morals, which had occupied but an inconsiderable space in the wide circle of science, allotted to him by his former office, were extended and methodized in a course, which employed five hours every week, during six months of the year; the example of his illustrious predecessor, and the prevailing topics of conversation around him, occasionally turned his thoughts to commercial politics, and produced some ingenious essays on different questions connected with trade, which were communicated to a private society of his academical friends; his early passion for the mathematical sciences was revived by the conversation of Simson, Moor, and the Wilsons; and, at the age of fifty-five, he attended the lectures of Black, with a juvenile curiosity and enthusiasm.

As the substance of Dr. Reid's Lectures at Glasgow (at least of that part of them which was most important and original) has been since given to the public in a more improved form, it is unnecessary for me to enlarge on the plan which he followed in the discharge of his official duties. I shall therefore only observe, that beside his speculations on the Intellectual and Active Powers of Man, and a system of Practical Ethics, his course comprehended some general views with respect to Natural Jurisprudence, and the fundamental principles of Politics. A few lectures on Rhetoric, which were read, at a separate hour, to a more advanced class of students, formed a voluntary addition to the appropriate functions of his office, to which, it is probable, he was prompted rather by a wish to supply what was then a deficiency in the established course of education, than by any predilection for a branch of study so foreign to his ordinary pursuits.

The merits of Dr. Reid, as a public teacher, were derived chiefly from that rich fund of original and instructive philosophy which is to be found in his writings; and from his un-

wearied assiduity in inculcating principles which he conceived to be of essential importance to human happiness. In his elocution and mode of instruction, there was nothing peculiarly attractive. He seldom, if ever, indulged himself in the warmth of extempore discourse; nor was his manner of reading calculated to increase the effect of what he had committed to writing. Such, however, was the simplicity and perspicuity of his style, such the gravity and authority of his character, and such the general interest of his young hearers in the doctrines which he taught, that by the numerous audiences to which his instructions were addressed, he was heard uniformly with the most silent and respectful attention. On this subject I speak from personal knowledge, having had the good fortune, during a considerable part of the winter of 1772, to be one of his pupils.

It does not appear to me, from what I am now able to recollect of the order which he observed in treating the different parts of his subject, that he had laid much stress on systematical arrangement. It is probable that he availed himself of whatever materials his private inquiries afforded for his academical compositions, without aiming at the merit of combining them into *a whole*, by a comprehensive and regular design;—an undertaking to which, if I am not mistaken, the established forms of his university, consecrated by long custom, would have presented some obstacles. One thing is certain, that neither he nor his immediate predecessor ever published any general *prospectus* of their respective plans; nor any *heads* or *outlines* to assist their students in tracing the trains of thought which suggested their various transitions.

The interest, however, excited by such details as these, even if it were in my power to render them more full and satisfactory, must necessarily be temporary and local; and I therefore hasten to observations of a more general nature, on the distinguishing characteristics of Dr. Reid's philosophical genius, and on the spirit and scope of those researches which he has bequeathed to posterity concerning the phenomena and laws of the human mind. In mentioning his first performance on this

subject, I have already anticipated a few remarks which are equally applicable to his subsequent publications; but the hints then suggested were too slight, to place in so strong a light as I could wish, the peculiarities of that mode of investigation, which it was the great object of his writings to recommend and to exemplify. His own anxiety, to neglect nothing that might contribute to its farther illustration, induced him, while his health and faculties were yet entire, to withdraw from his public labours, and to devote himself with an undivided attention to a task of more extensive and permanent utility. It was in the year 1780 that he carried this design into execution, at a period of life (for he was then seventy) when the infirmities of age might be supposed to account sufficiently for his retreat; but when, in fact, neither the vigour of his mind nor of his body seemed to have suffered any injury from time. The works which he published not many years afterwards, afford a sufficient proof of the assiduity with which he had availed himself of his literary leisure; his *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* appearing in 1785;* and those on the *Active Powers* in 1788.

As these two performances are, both of them, parts of one great work, to which his *Inquiry into the Human Mind* may be regarded as the introduction, I have reserved for this place whatever critical reflections I have to offer on his merits as an author; conceiving that they would be more likely to produce their intended effect, when presented at once in a connected form, than if interspersed, according to a chronological order, with the details of a biographical narrative.

* [These were dedicated to Mr. Stewart and Dr. James Gregory.]

SECTION II.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE SPIRIT AND SCOPE OF DR. REID'S PHILOSOPHY.

I HAVE already observed, that the distinguishing feature of Dr. Reid's Philosophy, is the systematical steadiness with which he has adhered in his inquiries to that plan of investigation which is delineated in the *Novum Organon*, and which has been so happily exemplified in physics by Sir Isaac Newton and his followers. To recommend this plan as the only effectual method of enlarging our knowledge of nature, was the favourite aim of all his studies, and a topic on which he thought he could not enlarge too much, in conversing or corresponding with his younger friends. In a letter to Dr. Gregory, which I have perused, he particularly congratulates him, upon his acquaintance with Lord Bacon's works; adding, "I am very apt to measure a man's understanding, by the opinion he entertains of that author."

It were perhaps to be wished, that he had taken a little more pains to illustrate the fundamental rules of that logic, the value of which he estimated so highly; more especially, to point out the modifications with which it is applicable to the science of Mind. Many important hints, indeed, connected with this subject, may be collected from different parts of his writings; but I am inclined to think, that a more ample discussion of it in a preliminary dissertation, might have thrown light on the scope of many of his researches, and obviated some of the most plausible objections which have been stated to his conclusions.

It is not, however, my intention at present, to attempt to

supply a *desideratum* of so great a magnitude;—an undertaking which, I trust, will find a more convenient place in the farther prosecution of those speculations with respect to the Intellectual Powers which I have already submitted to the public. The detached remarks which follow, are offered merely as a supplement to what I have stated concerning the nature and object of this branch of study, in the *Introduction to the Philosophy of the Human Mind.**

The influence of Bacon's genius on the subsequent progress of physical discovery, has been seldom fairly appreciated; by some writers almost entirely overlooked, and by others considered as the sole cause of the reformation in science which has since taken place. Of these extremes, the latter certainly is the least wide of the truth; for, in the whole history of letters, no other individual can be mentioned whose exertions have had so indisputable an effect in forwarding the intellectual progress of mankind. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged, that before the era when Bacon appeared, various philosophers in different parts of Europe had struck into the right path; and it may perhaps be doubted, whether any one important rule with respect to the true method of investigation be contained in his works, of which no hint can be traced in those of his predecessors. His great merit lay in concentrating their feeble and scattered lights;—fixing the attention of philosophers on the distinguishing characteristics of true and of false science, by a felicity of illustration peculiar to himself, seconded by the commanding powers of a bold and figurative eloquence. The method of investigation which he recommended had been previously followed in every instance, in which any solid discovery had been made with respect to the laws of nature, but it had been followed accidentally, and without any regular preconceived design; and it was reserved for him to reduce to rule and method what others had effected, either fortuitously, or from some momentary glimpse of the truth. It is justly observed by Dr. Reid, that "the man who first discovered that cold freezes water, and that heat turns it

* [*Works*, Vol. II. p. 45, *seq.*]

into vapour, proceeded on the same general principle by which Newton discovered the law of gravitation and the properties of light. His *Regulæ Philosophandi* are maxims of Common Sense, and are practised every day in common life; and he who philosophizes by other rules, either concerning the material system or concerning the mind, mistakes his aim."*

These remarks are not intended to detract from the just glory of Bacon; for they apply to all those, without exception, who have systematized the principles of any of the arts. Indeed, they apply less forcibly to him than to any other philosopher whose studies have been directed to objects analogous to his; inasmuch as we know of no art, of which the rules have been reduced successfully into a didactic form, when the art itself was as much in infancy as experimental philosophy was when Bacon wrote. Nor must it be supposed, that the utility was small of thus attempting to systematize the accidental processes of unenlightened ingenuity, and to give to the noblest exertions of human reason the same advantages of scientific method, which have contributed so much to ensure the success of genius in pursuits of inferior importance. The very philosophical motto† which Reynolds has so happily prefixed to his *Academical Discourses*, admits, on this occasion, of a still more appropriate application: "Omnia fere quæ præceptis continentur ab ingeniosis hominibus fiunt; sed casu quodam magis quam scientia. Ideoque doctrina et animadversio adhibenda est, ut ea quæ interdum sine ratione nobis occurrunt, semper in nostra potestate sint; et quoties res postulaverit, a nobis ex præparato adhibeantur."

But although a few superior minds seem to have been in some measure predisposed for that revolution in science, which Bacon contributed so powerfully to accomplish, the case was very different with the great majority of those who were then most distinguished for learning and talents. His views were plainly too advanced for the age in which he lived; and, that he was sensible of this himself, appears from those remarkable

* [*Inquiry*, &c., Introd. sect. i.; *Coll. Works*, p. 97.]

† [From Aquila Romanus. *Supra*, *Works*, Vol. V. p. 46.]

passages, in which he styles himself "the servant of posterity," and "bequeaths his fame to future times." Hobbes, who in his early youth had enjoyed his friendship, speaks a considerable time after Bacon's death, of experimental philosophy, in terms of contempt; influenced probably, not a little, by the tendency he perceived in the inductive method of inquiry, to undermine the foundations of that fabric of scepticism which it was the great object of his labours to rear. Nay, even during the course of the last century, it has been less from Bacon's own speculations, than from the examples of sound investigation exhibited by a few eminent men, who professed to follow him as their guide, that the practical spirit of his writings has been caught by the multitude of physical experimentalists over Europe;—truth and good sense descending gradually, in this as in other instances, by the force of imitation and of early habit, from the higher orders of intellect to the lower. In some parts of the Continent, more especially, the circulation of Bacon's philosophical works has been surprisingly slow. It is doubtful whether Descartes himself ever perused them;* and as late as the year 1759, if we may credit Montucla, they were very little known in France. The introductory discourse prefixed by D'Alembert to the *Encyclopédie*, first recommended them in that country to general attention.

The change which has taken place during the two last centuries in the plan of physical research, and the success which has so remarkably attended it, could not fail to suggest an idea, that something analogous might probably be accomplished at a future period, with respect to the phenomena of the intellectual world. And accordingly, various hints of this kind may be traced in different authors, since the era of Newton's discoveries. A memorable instance occurs in the prediction with which that great man concludes his *Optics*:—"That if natural philosophy, in all its parts, by pursuing the inductive method, shall at length be perfected, the bounds of moral philosophy will also be enlarged." Similar remarks may be found in other publications, particularly in Mr. Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*,

* [But see the *Dissertation*, *Works*, Vol. I. pp. 118, 544.]

where the subject is enlarged on with much ingenuity. As far however as I am able to judge, Dr. Reid was the first who conceived justly and clearly the analogy between these two different branches of human knowledge; defining with precision the distinct provinces of *Observation* and of *Reflection*, in furnishing the *data* of all our reasonings concerning *Matter* and *Mind;* and demonstrating the necessity of a careful separation between the phenomena which they respectively exhibit, while we adhere to the same mode of philosophizing in investigating the laws of both.

That so many philosophers should have thus missed their aim in prosecuting the study of the Human Mind, will appear the less surprising, when we consider in how many difficulties, peculiar to itself, this science is involved. It is sufficient at present to mention those which arise,—from the metaphorical origin of all the words which express the intellectual phenomena; from the subtle and fugitive nature of the objects of our reasonings; from the habits of inattention we acquire in early life, to the subjects of our consciousness; and from the prejudices which early impressions and associations create to warp our opinions. It must be remembered, too, that in the science of Mind (so imperfectly are its logical rules as yet understood!) we have not the same checks on the abuses of our reasoning powers, which serve to guard us against error in our other researches. In Physics, a speculative mistake is abandoned, when contradicted by facts which strike the senses. In Mathematics an absurd or inconsistent conclusion is admitted as a demonstrative proof of a faulty hypothesis. But, in those inquiries which relate to the principles of human nature, the absurdities and inconsistencies to which we are led by almost all the systems hitherto proposed, instead of suggesting corrections and improvements on these systems, have too frequently had the effect of producing scepticism with respect to all of them alike. How melancholy is the confession of Hume!—"The intense view of these manifold contradictions and imperfections in human reason, has so wrought upon me, and heated my brain, that I am ready to reject all belief and reasoning, and can look

upon no opinion even as more probable or likely than another."*

Under these discouragements to this branch of study, it affords some comfort to reflect on the great number of important facts with respect to the mind, which are scattered in the writings of philosophers. As the subject of our inquiry here lies within our own breast, a considerable mixture of truth may be expected even in those systems which are most erroneous; not only because a number of men can scarcely be long imposed on by a hypothesis which is perfectly groundless, concerning the objects of their own consciousness, but because it is generally by an alliance with truth and with the original principles of human nature, that prejudices and associations produce their effects.† Perhaps it may even be affirmed, that our progress in this research depends less on the degree of our industry and invention, than on our sagacity and good sense in separating old discoveries from the errors which have been blended with them; and on that candid and dispassionate temper that may prevent us from being led astray by the love of novelty, or the affectation of singularity. In this respect, the science of Mind possesses a very important advantage over that which relates to the laws of the material world. The former has been cultivated with more or less success in all ages and countries: the facts which serve as the basis of the latter have, with a very few exceptions, been collected during the course of the last two centuries. An observation similar to this is applied to systems of Ethics by Mr. Smith, in his account of the theory of Mandeville; and the illustration he gives of it may be extended with equal propriety to the science of mind in general. "A system of Natural philosophy," he remarks, "may appear very plausible, and be for a long time very generally received in the world, and yet have no foundation in nature, nor any sort of resemblance to the truth. But it is otherwise with systems of Moral philosophy. When a traveller

* [*Treatise of Human Nature*, Book I. Part iv. sect. 7; Vol. I. p. 466, orig. edit.]

† ["Every error," says Bossuet, "is a truth abused."]

gives an account of some distant country, he may impose upon our credulity the most groundless and absurd fictions as the most certain matters of fact: but when a person pretends to inform us of what passes in our neighbourhood, and of the affairs of the very parish we live in, though here too, if we are so careless as not to examine things with our own eyes, he may deceive us in many respects; yet the greatest falsehoods which he imposes on us must bear some resemblance to the truth, and must even have a considerable mixture of truth in them."*

These considerations demonstrate the essential importance, in this branch of study, of forming, at the commencement of our inquiries, just notions of the *criteria* of true and false science, and of the rules of philosophical investigation. They demonstrate, at the same time, that an attention to the rules of philosophizing, as they are exemplified in the physical researches of Newton and his followers, although the best of all preparations for an examination of the mental phenomena, is but one of the steps necessary to ensure our success. On an accurate comparison of the two subjects, it might probably appear, that after this preliminary step has been gained, the most arduous part of the process still remains. One thing is certain, that it is not from any defect in the power of ratiocination or deduction, that our speculative errors chiefly arise;—a fact of which we have a decisive proof in the facility with which most students may be taught the mathematical and physical sciences, when compared with the difficulty of leading their minds to the truth on questions of morals and politics.†

The logical rules which lay the foundation of sound and useful conclusions concerning the laws of this internal world, although not altogether overlooked by Lord Bacon, were plainly not the principal object of his work; and what he has written on the subject, consists chiefly of detached hints dropped casually in the course of other speculations. A comprehensive view of the sciences and arts dependent on the philosophy of the human

* [*Moral Sentiments*, Part VII. sect. ii. chap. 4, sixth and later editions.]

† [This sentence corresponds, almost literally, with one in Aristotle's *Nicomachian Ethics*.]

mind, exhibiting the relations which they bear to each other, and to the general system of human knowledge, would form a natural and useful introduction to the study of these logical principles; but such a view remains still a *desideratum*, after all the advances made towards it by Bacon and D'Alembert. Indeed, in the present improved state of things, much is wanting to complete and perfect that more simple part of their intellectual map which relates to the material universe. Of the inconsiderable progress hitherto made towards a just delineation of the method to be pursued in studying the mental phenomena, no other evidence is necessary than this, That the sources of error and false judgment so peculiarly connected, in consequence of the Association of Ideas, with studies in which our best interests are immediately and deeply concerned, have never yet been investigated with such accuracy, as to afford effectual aid to the student in his attempts to counteract their influence. One of these sources alone—that which arises from the imperfections of Language, furnishes an exception to the general remark. It attracted, fortunately, the particular notice of Locke, whose observations with respect to it, compose, perhaps, the most valuable part of his philosophical writings; and since the time of Condillac, the subject has been still more deeply analyzed by others. Even on this article much yet remains to be done; but enough has been already accomplished to justify the profound aphorism in which Bacon pointed it out to the attention of his followers:—"Credunt homines Rationem suam verbis imperare; sed fit etiam ut Verba vim suam super rationem retorqueant."[1]

Into these logical discussions concerning the means of advancing the philosophy of human nature, Dr. Reid has seldom entered; and still more rarely has he indulged himself in tracing the numerous relations by which this philosophy is connected with the practical business of life. But he has done

[1] [*Nov. Org.* Aph. lix. *et alibi.*]—This passage of Bacon forms the motto to a very ingenious and philosophical dissertation, (lately published by M. Prévost of Geneva,) entitled *Des Signes envisagés relativement à leur Influence sur la Formation des Idées.* Paris, an 8.

what was still more essential at the time he wrote: he has exemplified, with the happiest success, that *method of investigation* by which alone any solid progress can be made; directing his inquiries to a subject which forms a necessary groundwork for the labours of his successors,—an analysis of the various powers and principles belonging to our constitution. Of the importance of this undertaking, it is sufficient to observe, that it stands somewhat, although I confess not altogether, in the same relation to the different branches of Intellectual and Moral science, (such as grammar, rhetoric, logic, ethics, natural theology, and politics,) in which the Anatomy of the human body stands to the different branches of physiology and pathology. And as a course of medical education naturally, or rather necessarily, begins with a general survey of man's animal frame; so I apprehend, that the proper, or rather the essential preparation for those studies which regard our nobler concerns, is an examination of the principles which belong to man as an Intelligent, Active, Social, and Moral being. Nor does the importance of such an analysis rest here; it exerts an influence over all those sciences and arts which are connected with the material world; and the philosophy of Bacon itself, while it points out the road to physical truth, is but a branch of the Philosophy of the Human Mind.

The substance of these remarks is admirably expressed by Mr. Hume in the following passage,—allowances being made for a few trifling peculiarities of expression, borrowed from the theories which were prevalent at the time when he wrote:—"'Tis evident that all the sciences have a relation, greater or less, to human nature, and that however wide any of them may seem to run from it, they still return back by one passage or another. Even mathematics, natural philosophy, and natural religion, are, in some measure, dependent on the science of Man; since they lie under the cognizance of men, and are judged of by their powers and faculties. It is impossible to tell what changes and improvements we might make in these sciences, were we thoroughly acquainted with the extent and force of human understanding, and could

explain the nature of the ideas we employ, and of the operations we perform in our reasonings.

"If, therefore, the sciences of mathematics, natural philosophy, and natural religion, have such a dependence on the knowledge of Man, what may be expected in the other sciences, whose connexion with human nature is more close and intimate? The sole end of Logic is to explain the principles and operations of our reasoning faculty and the nature of our ideas: Morals and Criticism regard our tastes and sentiments; and Politics consider men as united in society, and dependent on each other. In these four sciences of Logic, Morals, Criticism, and Politics, is comprehended almost everything which it can any way import us to be acquainted with, or which can tend either to the improvement or ornament of the human mind.

"Here, then, is the only expedient from which we can hope for success in our philosophical researches: to leave the tedious, lingering method, which we have hitherto followed; and, instead of taking, now and then, a castle or village on the frontier, to march up directly to the capital or centre of these sciences, to human nature itself, which being once masters of, we may everywhere else hope for an easy victory. From this station we may extend our conquests over all those sciences which more intimately concern human life, and may afterwards proceed at leisure to discover more fully those which are the objects of pure curiosity. There is no question of importance, whose decision is not comprised in the science of man; and there is none which can be decided with any certainty before we become acquainted with that science."*

To prepare the way for the accomplishment of the design so forcibly recommended in the foregoing quotation, by exemplifying, in an analysis of our most important intellectual and active principles, the only method of carrying it successfully into execution, was the great object of Dr. Reid, in all his various philosophical publications. In examining these principles, he had chiefly in view a vindication of those *fundamental laws of belief* which form the groundwork of human

* [*Treatise of Human Nature*, Introd. Vol. I. pp. 4-6, orig. edit.]

knowledge, against the attacks made on their authority in some modern systems of scepticism; leaving to his successors the more agreeable task of applying the philosophy of the mind to its practical uses. On the *analysis* and classification of our powers, which he has proposed, much room for improvement must have been left in so vast an undertaking; but imperfections of this kind do not necessarily affect the justness of his conclusions, even where they may suggest to future inquirers the advantages of a simpler arrangement, and a more definite phraseology. Nor must it be forgotten, that, in consequence of the plan he has followed, the mistakes which may be detected in particular parts of his works, imply no such weakness in the fabric he has reared, as might have been justly apprehended, had he presented a connected system founded on gratuitous hypotheses, or on arbitrary definitions. The detections, on the contrary, of his occasional errors, may be expected, from the invariable consistency and harmony of truth, to throw new lights on those parts of his work, where his inquiries have been more successful; as the correction of a particular misstatement in an authentic history, is often found, by completing an imperfect link, or reconciling a seeming contradiction, to dispel the doubts which hung over the most faithful and accurate details of the narrative.

In Dr. Reid's first performance, he confined himself entirely to the *five Senses*, and the principles of our nature necessarily connected with them, reserving the further prosecution of the subject for a future period. At that time, indeed, he seems to have thought that a more comprehensive examination of the mind was an enterprise too great for one individual. "The powers," he observes, "of Memory, of Imagination, of Taste, of Reasoning, of Moral Perception, the Will, the Passions, the Affections, and all the Active powers of the soul, present a boundless field of philosophical disquisition, which the author of this *Inquiry* is far from thinking himself able to explore with accuracy. Many authors of ingenuity, ancient and modern, have made incursions into this vast territory, and have communicated useful observations; but there is reason to believe,

that those who have pretended to give us a map of the whole, have satisfied themselves with a very inaccurate and incomplete survey. If Galileo had attempted a complete system of natural philosophy, he had probably done little service to mankind; but, by confining himself to what was within his comprehension, he laid the foundation of a system of knowledge which rises by degrees, and does honour to the human understanding. Newton, building upon this foundation, and, in like manner, confining his inquiries to the law of gravitation and the properties of light, performed wonders. If he had attempted a great deal more, he had done a great deal less, and perhaps nothing at all. Ambitious of following such great examples, with unequal steps, alas! and unequal force, we have attempted an inquiry into one little corner only of the human mind; that corner which seems to be most exposed to vulgar observation, and to be most easily comprehended; and yet, if we have delineated it justly, it must be acknowledged that the accounts heretofore given of it were very lame, and wide of the truth."*

From these observations, when compared with the magnitude of the work which the author lived to execute, there is some ground for supposing that, in the progress of his researches, he became more and more sensible of the mutual connexion and dependence which exist among the conclusions we form concerning the various principles of human nature, even concerning those which seem, on a superficial view, to have the most remote relation to each other; and it was fortunate for the world that, in this respect, he was induced to extend his views so far beyond the limits of his original design. His examination, indeed, of the powers of External Perception, and of the questions immediately connected with them, bears marks of a still more minute diligence and accuracy than appear in some of his speculations concerning the other parts of our frame; and what he has written on the former subject, in his *Inquiry into the Human Mind*, is evidently more highly finished, both in matter and form, than the volumes which he published in his more advanced years. The value, however, of these is in-

* [*Inquiry*, Chap. VII.; *Collected Works*, p. 211.]

estimable to future adventurers in the same arduous undertaking, not only in consequence of the aids they furnish as a rough draught of the field to be examined, but, by the example they exhibit of a method of investigation on such subjects, hitherto very imperfectly understood by philosophers. It is by the originality of this method, so systematically pursued in all his researches, still more than by the importance of his particular conclusions, that he stands so conspicuously distinguished among those who have hitherto prosecuted analytically the study of Man.

I have heard it sometimes mentioned, as a subject of regret, that the writers who have applied themselves to this branch of knowledge, have, in general, aimed at a great deal more than it was possible to accomplish; extending their researches to all the different parts of our constitution, while a long life might be well employed in examining and describing the phenomena connected with any one particular faculty. Dr. Reid, in a passage already quoted from his *Inquiry*, might have been supposed to give some countenance to this opinion, if his own subsequent labours did not so strongly sanction the practice in question. The truth, I apprehend, is, That such detached researches concerning the human mind can seldom be attempted with much hope of success; and that those who have recommended them, have not attended sufficiently to the circumstances which so remarkably distinguish this study from that which has for its object the philosophy of the material world. A few remarks in illustration of this proposition seem to me to be necessary, in order to justify the reasonableness of Dr. Reid's undertaking; and they will be found to apply with still greater force to the labours of such as may wish to avail themselves of a similar analysis in explaining the varieties of human genius and character, or in developing the latent capacities of the youthful mind.

One consideration of a more general nature is, in the first place, worthy of notice; that in the infancy of every science, the grand and fundamental *desideratum* is a bold and comprehensive Outline;—somewhat for the same reason, that, in the cultivation of an extensive country, forests must be cleared, and wildernesses reclaimed, before the limits of private property

are fixed with accuracy; and long before the period, when the divisions and subdivisions of separate possessions give rise to the details of a curious and refined husbandry. The speculations of Lord Bacon embraced all the objects of human knowledge. Those of Newton and Boyle were confined to physics; but included an astonishing range of the material universe. The labours of their successors in our own times, have been employed with no less zeal in pursuing those more particular, but equally abstruse investigations, in which they were unable to engage, for want of a sufficient stock, both of facts and of general principles; and which did not perhaps interest their curiosity in any considerable degree.

If these observations are allowed to hold to a certain extent with respect to all the sciences, they apply in a more peculiar manner to the subjects treated of in Dr. Reid's writings;—subjects which are all so intimately connected, that it may be doubted if it be possible to investigate any one completely, without some general acquaintance, at least, with the rest. Even the theory of the Understanding may receive important lights from an examination of the Active and the Moral powers, the state of which in the mind of every individual will be found to have a powerful influence on his intellectual character;—while, on the other hand, an accurate analysis of the faculties of the Understanding would probably go far to obviate the sceptical difficulties which have been started concerning the origin of our Moral ideas. It appears to me, therefore, that whatever be the department of mental science that we propose more particularly to cultivate, it is necessary to begin with a survey of human nature in *all* its various parts; studying these parts, however, not so much on their own account, as with a reference to the applications of which our conclusions are susceptible to our favourite purpose. The researches of Dr. Reid, when considered carefully in the relation which they bear to each other, afford numberless illustrations of the truth of this remark. His leading design was evidently to overthrow the modern system of Scepticism; and at every successive step of his progress, new and unexpected lights break in on his fundamental principles.

It is, however, chiefly in their practical application to the conduct of the understanding, and the culture of the heart, that such partial views are likely to be dangerous; for here, they tend not only to mislead our theoretical conclusions, but to counteract our improvement and happiness. Of this I am so fully convinced, that the most faulty theories of human nature, provided only they embrace the whole of it, appear to me less mischievous in their probable effects, than those more accurate and microscopical researches which are habitually confined to one particular corner of our constitution. It is easy to conceive, that where the attention is wholly engrossed with the Intellectual powers, the Moral principles will be in danger of running to waste; and it is no less certain, on the other hand, that by confining our care to the moral constitution alone, we may suffer the understanding to remain under the influence of unhappy prejudices, and destitute of those just and enlightened views, without which the worthiest dispositions are of little use, either to ourselves or to society. An exclusive attention to any one of the subordinate parts of our frame,—to the culture of taste, (for example,) or of the argumentative powers, or even to the refinement of our moral sentiments and feelings,—must be attended with a hazard proportionally greater.

"In forming the human character," says Bacon, in a passage which Lord Bolingbroke has pronounced to be one of the finest and deepest in his writings, "we must not proceed, as a statuary does in forming a statue, who works sometimes on the face, sometimes on the limbs, sometimes on the folds of the drapery; but we must proceed (and it is in our power to proceed) as nature does in forming a flower, or any other of her productions;—she throws out altogether, and at once, the whole system of being, and the rudiments of all the parts. *Rudimenta partium omnium simul parit et producit.*"[1]

[1] In the foregoing paragraph, I have borrowed (with a very trifling alteration) Lord Bolingbroke's words, in a beautiful paraphrase on Bacon's remark.—See his *Idea of a Patriot King*.—[The passage in Bacon is *De Augm. Scient.* Lib. VII. cap. iii.; see also *Adv. of Learn.* Book II. *The Culture of the Mind*, § 19.—*Works*, Vol. VIII. p. 427, and Vol. II. p. 252, Montagu's edition.]

Of this passage, so strongly marked with Bacon's capacious intellect, and so richly adorned with his "philosophical fancy," I will not weaken the impression by any comment; and, indeed, to those who do not intuitively perceive its evidence, no comment would be useful.

In what I have hitherto said of Dr. Reid's speculations, I have confined myself to such general views of the scope of his researches, and of his mode of philosophizing, as seemed most likely to facilitate the perusal of his works to those readers who have not been much conversant with these abstract disquisitions. A slight review of some of the more important and fundamental objections which have been proposed to his doctrines may, I hope, be useful as a farther preparation for the same course of study.

Of these objections, the four following appear to me to be chiefly entitled to attention.

1. That he has assumed gratuitously, in all his reasonings, that theory concerning the human soul, which the scheme of Materialism calls in question.

2. That his views tend to damp the ardour of philosophical curiosity, by stating as ultimate facts, phenomena which may be resolved into principles more simple and general.

3. That by an unnecessary multiplication of original or instinctive principles, he has brought the science of mind into a state more perplexed and unsatisfactory, than that in which it was left by Locke and his successors.

4. That his philosophy, by sanctioning an appeal from the decisions of the learned to the voice of the multitude, is unfavourable to a spirit of free inquiry, and lends additional stability to popular errors.

1. With respect to Dr. Reid's supposed assumption of a doubtful hypothesis concerning the nature of the thinking and sentient principle, it is almost sufficient for me to observe, that the charge is directed against that very point of his philosophy in which it is most completely invulnerable. The circumstance which peculiarly characterizes the inductive science of mind is, that it professes to abstain from all speculations concerning its nature and essence, confining the attention

entirely to *phenomena*, for which we have the evidence of consciousness, and to the laws by which these phenomena are regulated. In this respect, it differs equally, in its scope, from the pneumatological discussions of the schools, and from the no less visionary theories, so loudly vaunted by the physiological metaphysicians of more modern times. Compared with the first, it differs, as the inquiries of the *mechanical* philosophers concerning the laws of moving bodies, differ from the discussions of the ancient sophists concerning the existence and the nature of motion. Compared with the other, the difference is analogous to what exists between the conclusions of Newton concerning the law of gravitation, and his *query* concerning the invisible, either of which he supposed it might possibly be the effect. The facts which this inductive science aims at ascertaining, rest on their own proper evidence,—an evidence unconnected with all these hypotheses, and which would not, in the smallest degree, be affected, although the truth of any one of them should be fully established. It is not, therefore, on account of its inconsistency with any favourite opinions of my own, that I would oppose the disquisitions either of scholastic pneumatology, or of physiological metaphysics; but because I consider them as an idle waste of time and genius on questions where our conclusions can neither be verified nor overturned by an appeal to experiment or observation. Sir Isaac Newton's query concerning the cause of gravitation was certainly not *inconsistent* with his own discoveries concerning its laws; but what would have been the consequences to the world, if he had indulged himself in the prosecution of hypothetical theories with respect to the former, instead of directing his astonishing powers to an investigation of the latter?

That the general spirit of Dr. Reid's philosophy is hostile to the conclusions of the Materialist, is indeed a fact. Not, however, because his system rests on the contrary hypothesis as a fundamental principle, but because his inquiries have a powerful tendency to wean the understanding gradually from those obstinate associations and prejudices, to which the common mechanical theories of mind owe all their plausibility. It is, in

truth, much more from such examples of sound research concerning the laws of thought, than from any direct metaphysical refutation, that a change is to be expected in the opinions of those who have been accustomed to confound together two classes of phenomena, so completely and essentially different. But this view of the subject does not belong to the present argument.

It has been recommended of late, by a Medical author of great reputation, to those who wish to study the human mind, to begin with preparing themselves for the task by the study of anatomy. I must confess, I cannot perceive the advantages of this order of investigation, as the anatomy of the body does not seem to me more likely to throw light on the philosophy of the mind, than an analysis of the mind to throw light on the physiology of the body. To ascertain, indeed, the general laws of their connexion, from facts established by observation or experiment, is a reasonable and most interesting object of philosophical curiosity; and in this inquiry, (which was long ago proposed and recommended by Lord Bacon,) a knowledge of the constitution both of mind and body is indispensably requisite; but even here, if we wish to proceed on firm ground, the two classes of facts must be kept completely distinct, so that neither of them may be warped or distorted, in consequence of theories suggested by their supposed relations or analogies.[1] Thus, in many of the phenomena connected with custom and habit, there is ample scope for investigating general laws, both with respect to our mental and our corporeal frame; but what light do we derive from such information concerning this part of our constitution, as is contained in the following sentence of Locke? "Habits seem to be but trains of motion in the animal spirits, which, once set a-going, continue in the same steps they had been used to, which, by often treading, are worn into a smooth path."* In like manner, the laws which regulate the connexion between the mind and our external organs, in the case of Perception, have furnished a very fertile subject of

[1] *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, pp. 11, 12, 2d edit.—[Introd. *supra*, *Works*, Vol. II. pp. 52, 53.]

* [*Essay*, &c., Book II. chap. xxxiii. § 6.]

examination to some of the best of our modern philosophers; but how impotent does the genius of Newton itself appear, when it attempts to shoot the gulf which separates the sensible world, and the sentient principle? "Is not the Sensorium of animals," he asks in one of his Queries, "the place where the sentient substance is present, and to which the sensible Species of things are brought through the nerves and brain, that they may be perceived by the mind present in that place?"

It ought to be remembered also, that this inquiry, with respect to the laws regulating the connexion between our bodily organization, and the phenomena subjected to our own consciousness, is but one particular department of the philosophy of the mind, and that there still remains a wide and, indeed, boundless region, where all our *data* must be obtained from our own mental operations. In examining, for instance, the powers of judgment and reasoning, let any person of sound understanding, after perusing the observations of Bacon on the different classes of our prejudices, or those of Locke on the abuse of words, turn his attention to the speculations of some of our contemporary theorists, and he will at once perceive the distinction between the two modes of investigation which I wish at present to contrast. "Reasoning," says one of the most ingenious and original of these, "is that operation of the *sensorium*, by which we excite two or many tribes of ideas, and then re-excite the ideas in which they differ or correspond. If we determine this difference, it is called Judgment; if we in vain endeavour to determine it, it is called Doubting. If we re-excite the ideas in which they differ, it is called Distinguishing; if we re-excite those in which they correspond, it is called Comparing."[1] In what acceptation the word *idea* is to be understood in the foregoing passage, may be learned from the following definition of the same author:—"The word *idea*, has various meanings in the writers of metaphysic. It is here used simply for those notions of external things which our organs of sense bring us acquainted with originally; and is defined, a contraction, or motion, or configuration of the fibres,

[1] [Darwin's] *Zoonomia*, vol i. p. 181, 3d edit.

which constitute the immediate organ of sense."[1] Mr. Hume, who was less of a physiologist than Dr. Darwin, has made use of a language by no means so theoretical and arbitrary, but still widely removed from the simplicity and precision essentially necessary in studies, where everything depends on the cautious use of terms. "*Belief*," according to him, is "a lively idea related to or associated with a present impression."* "*Memory* is the faculty by which we repeat our impressions, so as that they retain a considerable degree of their first vivacity, and are somewhat intermediate betwixt an *idea* and an *impression*." †

According to the views of Dr. Reid, the terms which express the simple powers of the mind, are considered as unsusceptible of definition or explanation; the words Feeling, for example, Knowledge, Will, Doubt, Belief, being, in this respect, on the same footing with the words Green or Scarlet, Sweet or Bitter. To the names of these mental operations, all men annex some notions more or less distinct; and the only way of conveying to them notions more correct, is by teaching them to exercise their own powers of reflection. The definitions quoted from Hume and Darwin, even if they were more unexceptionable in point of phraseology, would, for these reasons, be unphilosophical, as attempts to simplify what is incapable of analysis; but as they are actually stated, they not only envelop truth in mystery, but lay a foundation, at the very outset, for an erroneous theory. It is worth while to add, that of the two theories in question, that of Darwin, how inferior soever, in the estimation of competent judges, as a philosophical work, is by far the best calculated to impose on a very wide circle of readers, by the mixture it exhibits of crude and visionary metaphysics, with those important facts and conclusions which might be expected from the talents and experience of such a writer, in the present advanced state of medical and physiological science. The questions which have been hitherto confined to a few, prepared for such discussions by habits of philosophical study, are

[1] Ibid. Vol. i. pp. 11, 12.

* [*Treatise on Human Nature*, Part III. sect. vii. Vol. I. p. 172, orig. edit.]

† [Ibid. Part I. sect. iii. Vol. I. p. 23, *seq.*]

thus submitted to the consideration, not only of the cultivated and enlightened minds which adorn the medical profession, but of the half-informed multitude who follow the medical trade; nor is it to be doubted, that many of these will give the author credit, upon subjects of which they feel themselves incompetent to judge, for the same ability which he displays within their own professional sphere. The hypothetical principles assumed by Hume are intelligible to those only who are familiarized to the language of the schools; and his ingenuity and elegance, captivating as they are to men of taste and refinement, possess slight attractions to the majority of such as are most likely to be misled by his conclusions.

After all, I do not apprehend that the physiological theories concerning the mind, which have made so much noise of late, will produce a very lasting impression. The splendour of Dr. Darwin's accomplishments could not fail to bestow a temporary importance on whatever opinions were sanctioned by his name, as the chemical discoveries which have immortalized that of Priestley, have, for a while, recalled from oblivion the reveries of Hartley. But, abstracting from these accidental instances, in which human reason seems to have held a retrograde course, there has certainly been, since the time of Descartes, a continual, and, on the whole, a very remarkable approach to the inductive plan of studying human nature. We may trace this in the writings even of those who profess to consider *thought* merely as *an agitation of the brain*;* in the writings more particularly of Hume and of Helvetius, both of whom, although they may have occasionally expressed themselves in an unguarded manner, concerning the nature of mind, have, in their most useful and practical disquisitions, been prevented, by their own good sense, from blending any theory with respect to the *causes* of the intellectual phenomena, with the history of facts, or the investigation of general laws. The authors who form the most conspicuous exceptions to this gradual progress, consist chiefly of men whose errors may be easily accounted for by the prejudices connected with their circumscribed habits of obser-

* [Hume's words.]

vation and inquiry,—of physiologists, accustomed to attend to that part alone of the human frame which the knife of the anatomist can lay open; or of chemists, who enter on the analysis of Thought, fresh from the decompositions of the laboratory, carrying into the theory of Mind itself (what Bacon expressively calls) "the smoke and tarnish of the furnace." Of the value of such pursuits, none can think more highly than myself; but I must be allowed to observe, that the most distinguished pre-eminence in them does not necessarily imply a capacity of collected and abstracted reflection, or an understanding superior to the prejudices of early association, and the illusions of popular language. I will not go so far as Cicero, when he ascribes to those who possess these advantages a more than ordinary vigour of intellect: "*Magni est ingenii revocare mentem a sensibus, et cogitationem a consuetudine abducere.*"* I would only claim for them the merit of patient and cautious research, and would exact from their antagonists the same qualifications.[1]

In offering these remarks, I have no wish to exalt any one branch of useful knowledge at the expense of another, but to combat prejudices equally fatal to the progress of them all. With the same view, I cannot help taking notice of a prevailing, but very mistaken idea, that the formation of a hypothetical system is a stronger proof of inventive genius, than the patient investigation of nature in the way of induction. To form a system, appears to the young and inexperienced understanding a species of creation; to ascend slowly to general conclusions, from the observation and comparison of particular facts, is to comment servilely on the works of another.

No opinion, surely, can be more groundless. To fix on a few principles, or even on a single principle, as the foundation of a theory, and by an artful statement of supposed facts, aided by a dexterous use of language, to give a plausible explanation, by means of it, of an immense number of phenomena, is within the reach of most men whose talents have been a little exercised among the subtilties of the schools.

* [*Tusc. Disp.* Lib. I. cap. xvi.]

[1] See Note D.

Whereas, to follow nature through all her varieties with a quick yet an exact eye—to record faithfully what she exhibits, and to record nothing more—to trace, amidst the diversity of her operations, the simple and comprehensive laws by which they are regulated, and sometimes to guess at the beneficent purposes to which they are subservient,—may be safely pronounced to be the highest effort of a created intelligence. And, accordingly, the number of ingenious theorists has, in every age, been great; that of sound philosophers has been wonderfully small, or rather they are only beginning now to have a glimpse of their way, in consequence of the combined lights furnished by their predecessors.

Descartes aimed at a complete system of physics, deduced *a priori* from the abstract suggestions of his own reason; Newton aspired no higher than at a faithful "interpretation of Nature," in a few of the more general laws which she presents to our notice: and yet the intellectual power displayed in the voluminous writings of the former, vanishes into nothing when compared with what we may trace in a single page of the latter. On this occasion a remark of Lord Bacon appears singularly apposite, that "Alexander and Cæsar, though they acted without the aid of magic or prodigy, performed exploits that are truly greater than what fable reports of King Arthur or Amadis de Gaul."*

I shall only add farther on this head, that the last observation holds more strictly with respect to the philosophy of the human mind than any other branch of science; for there is no subject whatever, on which it is so easy to form theories calculated to impose on the multitude, and none where the discovery of truth is attended with so many difficulties. One great cause of this is, the analogical or theoretical terms employed in ordinary language to express everything relating either to our intellectual or active powers; in consequence of which, specious explanations of the most mysterious phenomena may be given to superficial inquirers; while, at the same time, the labour of just investigation is increased to an incalculable degree.

* [*Interpretation of Nature*, chap. x.; *Advancement of Learning*, Book II. —*Works*, Vol. I. p. 283, and Vol. II. p. 146, Montagu's edition.]

2. To allege, that in this circumscription of the field of our inquiries concerning the mind, there is any tendency to repress a reasonable and philosophical curiosity, is a charge no less unfounded than the former; inasmuch as every physical inquiry concerning the material world is circumscribed by limits precisely analogous. In all our investigations, whatever their subject may be, the business of philosophy is confined to a reference of particular facts to other facts more general; and our most successful researches must at length terminate in some law of nature, of which no explanation can be given. In its application to Dr. Reid's writings, this objection has, I think, been more pointedly directed against his reasonings concerning the process of nature in Perception; a part of his writings which (as it is of fundamental importance in his general system) he has laboured with peculiar care. The result is, indeed, by no means flattering to the pride of those theorists who profess to explain everything; for it amounts to an acknowledgment, that after all the lights which anatomy and physiology supply, the information we obtain by means of our senses, concerning the existence and the qualities of matter, is no less incomprehensible to our faculties, than it appears to the most illiterate peasant; and that all we have gained is a more precise and complete acquaintance with some particulars in our animal economy,—highly interesting indeed when regarded in their proper light, as accessions to our physical knowledge, but, considered in connexion with the philosophy of the mind, affording only a more accurate statement of the astonishing phenomena which we would vainly endeavour to explain. This language has been charged, but most unjustly and ignorantly, with *mysticism;* for the same charge may be brought, with equal fairness, against all the most important discoveries in the sciences. It was in truth the very objection urged against Newton, when his adversaries contended, that *gravity* was to be ranked with the *occult qualities* of the schoolmen, till its mechanical cause should be assigned; and the answer given to this objection by Sir Isaac Newton's commentator, Mr. Maclaurin, may be literally applied, in the

instance before us, to the inductive philosophy of the human mind.

"The opponents of Newton, finding nothing to object to his observations and reasonings, pretended to find a resemblance between his doctrines and the exploded tenets of the scholastic philosophy. They triumphed mightily in treating gravity as an occult quality, because he did not pretend to deduce this principle fully from its cause. . . . I know not that ever it was made an objection to the circulation of the blood, that there is no small difficulty in accounting for it mechanically. They, too, who first extended gravity to air, vapour, and to all bodies round the earth, had their praise; though the cause of gravity was as obscure as before, or *rather appeared more mysterious*, after they had shewn, that there was no body found near the earth, exempt from gravity, that might be supposed to be its cause. Why, then, were his admirable discoveries, by which this principle was extended over the universe, so ill relished by some philosophers? The truth is, he had, with great evidence, overthrown the boasted schemes by which they pretended to unravel all the mysteries of nature; and the philosophy he introduced, in place of them, carrying with it a sincere confession of our being far from a complete and perfect knowledge of it, could not please those who had been accustomed to imagine themselves possessed of the eternal reasons and primary causes of all things.

"It was, however, no new thing that this philosophy should meet with opposition. All the useful discoveries that were made in former times, and particularly in the seventeenth century, had to struggle with the prejudices of those who had accustomed themselves not so much as to think, but in a certain systematic way; who could not be prevailed on to abandon their favourite schemes, while they were able to imagine the least pretext for continuing the dispute. Every art and talent was displayed to support their falling cause; no aid seemed foreign to them that could in any manner annoy their adversary; and such often was their obstinacy, that truth was able to make little progress, till they were

succeeded by younger persons who had not so strongly imbibed their prejudices."*

These excellent observations are not the less applicable to the subject now under consideration, that the part of Dr. Reid's writings which suggested the quotation, leads only to the correction of an inveterate prejudice, not to any new general conclusion. It is probable, indeed, (now that the ideal theory has in a great measure disappeared from our late metaphysical systems,) that those who have a pleasure in detracting from the merits of their predecessors, may be disposed to represent it as an idle waste of labour and ingenuity, to have entered into a serious refutation of a hypothesis at once gratuitous and inconceivable. A different judgment, however, will be formed by such as are acquainted with the extensive influence which, from the earliest accounts of science, this single prejudice has had in vitiating almost every branch of the philosophy of the mind; and who, at the same time, recollect the names of the illustrious men by whom, in more modern times, it has been adopted as an incontrovertible principle. It is sufficient for me to mention those of Berkeley, Hume, Locke, Clarke, and Newton. To the two first of these, it has served as the basis of their sceptical conclusions, which seem indeed to follow from it as necessary consequences; while the others repeatedly refer to it in their reasonings, as one of those facts concerning the mind, of which it would be equally superfluous to attempt a proof or a refutation.

I have enlarged on this part of Dr. Reid's writings the more fully, as he was himself disposed, on all occasions, to rest upon it his chief merit as an author. In proof of this, I shall transcribe a few sentences from a letter of his to Dr. [James] Gregory, dated 20th August 1790.

"It would be want of candour not to own, that I think there is some merit in what you are pleased to call *my Philosophy;* but I think it lies chiefly in having called in question the common theory of *Ideas* or *Images of things in the mind* being the only objects of thought;—a theory founded on natural prejudices, and so universally received as to be interwoven

* [*Account of Newton's Discoveries.*]

with the structure of language. Yet were I to give you a detail of what led me to call in question this theory, after I had long held it as self-evident and unquestionable, you would think, as I do, that there was much of chance in the matter. The discovery was the birth of time, not of genius; and Berkeley and Hume did more to bring it to light than the man that hit upon it. I think there is hardly anything that can be called *mine* in the philosophy of the mind, which does not follow with ease from the detection of this prejudice.

"I must, therefore, beg of you most earnestly to make no contrast in my favour to the disparagement of my predecessors in the same pursuit. I can truly say of them, and shall always avow, what you are pleased to say of me, that but for the assistance I have received from their writings, I never could have wrote or thought what I have done."

3. Somewhat connected with the last objection, are the censures which have been so frequently bestowed on Dr. Reid, for an unnecessary and unsystematical multiplication of original or instinctive principles.

In reply to these censures, I have little to add to what I have remarked on the same topic, in the *Philosophy of the Human Mind.** That the fault which is thus ascribed to Dr. Reid has been really committed by some ingenious writers in this part of the island, I most readily allow; nor will I take upon me to assert, that he has, in no instance, fallen into it himself. Such instances, however, will be found, on an accurate examination of his works, to be comparatively few, and to bear a very trifling proportion to those, in which he has most successfully and decisively displayed his acuteness, in exposing the premature and flimsy generalizations of his predecessors.

A certain degree of leaning to that extreme to which Dr. Reid seems to have inclined, was, at the time when he wrote, much safer than the opposite bias. From the earliest ages, the sciences in general, and more particularly the science of the human mind, have been vitiated by an undue love of simplicity; and, in the course of the last century, this disposition,

* [*Elements*, Vol. I. Chap. i. sect. 3; *Works*, Vol. II. p. 108, *seq.*]

after having been long displayed in subtile theories concerning the Active Powers, or the Principles of Human Conduct, has been directed to similar refinements with respect to the Faculties of the Understanding, and the Truths with which they are conversant. Mr. Hume himself has coincided so far with the Hartleian school, as to represent the "principle of union and cohesion among our simple ideas as a kind of *attraction*, of as universal application in the Mental world as in the Natural;"[1] and Dr. Hartley, with a still more sanguine imagination, looked forward to an era, "when future generations shall put all kinds of evidences and inquiries into mathematical forms; reducing Aristotle's ten categories, and Bishop Wilkin's forty *summa genera*, to the head of quantity alone, so as to make mathematics and logic, natural history and civil history, natural philosophy and philosophy of all other kinds, coincide *omni ex parte*."[2]

It is needless to remark the obvious tendency of such premature generalizations to withdraw the attention from the study of particular phenomena; while the effect of Reid's mode of philosophizing, even in those instances where it is carried to an excess, is to detain us, in this preliminary step, a little longer than is absolutely necessary. The truth is, that when the phenomena are once ascertained, generalization is here of comparatively little value, and a task of far less difficulty than to observe facts with precision, and to record them with fairness.

In no part of Dr. Reid's writings, I am inclined to think, could more plausible criticisms be made on this ground, than in his classification of our Active Principles; but even there, the facts are always placed fully and distinctly before the reader. That several of the benevolent affections which he has stated as ultimate facts in our constitution, might be analyzed into the same general principle differently modified, according to circumstances, there can, in my opinion, be little doubt. This, however, (as I have elsewhere observed,[3]) notwithstanding the

[1] *Treatise of Human Nature*, Vol. I. p. 30, [orig. ed.]

[2] Hartley, *On Man*, p. 207, 4to edition. London, 1791.

[3] *Outlines of Moral Philosophy*, pp. 79, 80. Second edition. Edinburgh, 1801.—[*Supra*, *Works*, Vol. VI. pp. 12, 13.]

stress which has been sometimes laid upon it, is chiefly a question of arrangement. Whether we suppose these affections to be all ultimate facts, or some of them to be resolvable into other facts more general, they are equally to be regarded as constituent parts of human nature; and, upon either supposition, we have equal reason to admire the wisdom with which that nature is adapted to the situation in which it is placed. The laws which regulate the acquired perceptions of Sight, are surely as much a part of our frame, as those which regulate any of our original perceptions; and, although they require, for their development, a certain degree of experience and observation in the individual, the uniformity of the result shows, that there is nothing arbitrary nor accidental in their origin. In this point of view, what can be more philosophical, as well as beautiful, than the words of Mr. Ferguson, that "natural affection springs up in the soul of the mother, as the milk springs in her breast, to furnish nourishment to her child!"— "The effect is here to the race," as the same author has excellently observed, "what the vital motion of the heart is to the individual, too necessary to the preservation of nature's works, to be intrusted to the precarious will or intention of those most nearly concerned."[1]

The question, indeed, concerning the origin of our different affections, leads to some curious analytical disquisitions, but is of very subordinate importance to those inquiries which relate to their laws, and uses, and mutual references. In many ethical systems, however, it seems to have been considered as the most interesting subject of disquisition which this wonderful part of our frame presents.

In Dr. Reid's *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, and in his *Inquiry into the Human Mind*, I recollect little that can justly incur a similar censure, notwithstanding the ridicule which Dr. Priestley has attempted to throw on the last of these

[1] *Principles of Moral and Political Science*, Part I. chap. i. sect. 3, *Of the principles of society in human nature.* The whole discussion unites, in a singular degree, the soundest philosophy with the most eloquent description.

performances, in his *Table of Reid's Instinctive Principles.*[1] To examine all the articles enumerated in that table, would require a greater latitude of disquisition than the limits of this Memoir allow,* and therefore I shall confine my observations to a few instances, where the precipitancy of the general criticism seems to me to admit of little dispute. In this light I cannot help considering it, when applied to those dispositions or determinations of the mind, to which Dr. Reid has given the names of the *Principle of Credulity*, and the *Principle of Veracity.* How far these titles are happily chosen, is a question of little moment, and on that point I am ready to make every concession. I contend only for what is essentially connected with the objection which has given rise to these remarks.

"That any man," says Dr. Priestley, "should imagine that a peculiar instinctive principle was necessary to explain our giving credit to the relations of others, appears to me, who have been used to see things in a different light, very extraordinary, and yet this doctrine is advanced by Dr. Reid, and adopted by Dr. Beattie. But really," he adds, "what the former says in favour of it, is hardly deserving of the slightest notice."[2]

The passage quoted by Dr. Priestley in justification of this very peremptory decision, is as follows:—"If credulity were the effect of reasoning and experience, it must grow up and gather strength in the same proportion as reason and experience do. But if it is the gift of nature, it will be the strongest in childhood, and limited and restrained by experience; and the most superficial view of human life shews that this last is the case, and not the first."†

To my own judgment, this argument of Dr. Reid's, when connected with the excellent illustrations which accompany it, carries complete conviction; and I am confirmed in my opinion by finding that Mr. Smith (a writer inferior to none in acuteness, and strongly disposed by the peculiar bent of his genius,

[1] *Examination of Reid's Inquiry*, &c., London, 1774.

* [See above, *Works*, (*Essays*,) Vol. V., Note A, p. 409.]

[2] *Examination of Reid's Inquiry*, &c., p. 82.

† [*Inquiry*, Chap. VI. sect. xxiv.; Reid's *Collected Works*, p. 197.]

to simplify, as far as possible, the Philosophy of Human Nature) has, in the latest edition of his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, acquiesced in this very conclusion, urging in support of it the same reasoning which Dr. Priestley affects to estimate so lightly.—"There seems to be in young children an instinctive disposition to believe whatever they are told. Nature seems to have judged it necessary for their preservation, that they should, for some time at least, put implicit confidence in those to whom the care of their childhood, and of the earliest and most necessary part of their education, is intrusted. Their credulity, accordingly, is excessive, and it requires long and much experience of the falsehood of mankind to reduce them to a reasonable degree of diffidence and distrust."[1] That Mr. Smith's opinion also coincided with Dr. Reid's, in what he has stated concerning the *principle of Veracity*, appears evidently from the remarks which immediately follow the passage just quoted. But I must not add to the length of this Memoir by unnecessary citations.

Another instinctive principle mentioned by Reid, is "our belief of the continuance of the present course of nature."—"All our knowledge of nature," he observes, "beyond our original perceptions, is got by experience, and consists in the interpretation of natural signs. The appearance of the sign is followed by the belief of the thing signified. Upon this principle of our constitution, not only acquired perception, but also inductive reasoning, and all reasoning from analogy, is grounded; and, therefore, for want of a better name, we shall beg leave to call it the *inductive principle*. It is from the force of this principle that we immediately assent to that axiom, upon which all our knowledge of nature is built, that effects of the same kind must have the same cause. Take away the light of this inductive principle, and experience is as blind as a mole. She may indeed feel what is present, and what immediately touches her, but she sees nothing that is either before or behind, upon the right hand or upon the left, future or past."*

[1] Smith's *Theory*, last edit. Part VII. sect. iv.

* [*Inquiry*, Chap. VI. sect. xxiv.; Reid's *Collected Works*, p. 199, *seq.*]

On this doctrine, likewise, the same critic has expressed himself with much severity, calling it "a mere quibble;" and adding, "Every step that I take among this writer's sophisms, raises my astonishment higher than before." In this, however, as in many other instances, he has been led to censure Dr. Reid, not because he was able to see farther than his antagonist, but because he did not see quite so far. Turgot, in an article inserted in the French *Encyclopédie*, and Condorcet, in a discourse prefixed to one of his mathematical publications,[1] have, both of them, stated the fact with a true philosophical precision, and after doing so, have deduced from it an inference, not only the same in substance with that of Dr. Reid, but expressed in almost the same form of words.

In these references, as well as in that already made to Mr. Smith's *Theory*, I would not be understood to lay any undue stress on authority, in a philosophical argument. I wish only, by contrasting the modesty and caution resulting from habits of profound thought, with that theoretical intrepidity which a blindness to insuperable difficulties has a tendency to inspire, to invite those whose prejudices against this part of Reid's system rest chiefly on the great names to which they conceive it to be hostile, to re-examine it with a little more attention, before they pronounce finally on its merits.

The prejudices which are apt to occur against a mode of philosophizing, so mortifying to scholastic arrogance, are encouraged greatly by that natural disposition, to refer particular facts to general laws, which is the foundation of all scientific arrangement, a principle of the utmost importance to our intellectual constitution, but which requires the guidance of a sound and experienced understanding to accomplish the purposes for which it was destined. They are encouraged also, in no inconsiderable degree, by the acknowledged success of Mathematicians, in raising, on the basis of a few simple *data*, the most magnificent, and at the same time the most solid, fabric of science of which human genius can boast. The absurd refer-

[1] *Essai sur l'Application de l'Analyse à la Probabilité des Décisions rendues à la Pluralité des Voix.* Paris, 1785.

ences which Logicians are accustomed to make to Euclid's *Elements of Geometry*, as a model which cannot be too studiously copied, both in Physics and in Morals, have contributed in this as in a variety of other instances, to mislead philosophers from the study of facts, into the false refinements of hypothetical theory.

On these misapplications of Mathematical method to sciences which rest ultimately on experiment and observation, I shall take another opportunity of offering some strictures. At present, it is sufficient to remark the peculiar nature of the truths about which pure or abstract mathematics are conversant. As these truths have all a necessary connexion with each other, (all of them resting ultimately on those definitions or hypotheses which are the principles of our reasoning,) the beauty of the science cannot fail to increase in proportion to the simplicity of the *data*, compared with the incalculable variety of consequences which they involve; and to the simplifications and generalizations of theory on such a subject, it is perhaps impossible to conceive any limit. How different is the case in those inquiries, where our first principles are not *definitions* but *facts*, and where our business is not to trace necessary connexions, but the laws which regulate the established order of the universe!

In various attempts which have been lately made, more especially on the Continent, towards a systematical exposition of the elements of Physics, the effects of the mistake I am now censuring are extremely remarkable. The happy use of mathematical principles exhibited in the writings of Newton and his followers, having rendered an extensive knowledge of them an indispensable preparation for the study of the Mechanical philosophy, the early habits of thought acquired in the former pursuit are naturally transferred to the latter. Hence the illogical and obscure manner in which its elementary principles have frequently been stated, an attempt being made to deduce from the smallest possible number of *data*, the whole system of truths which it comprehends. The analogy existing among some of the fundamental laws of mechanics, bestows, in the

opinion of the multitude, an appearance of plausibility on such attempts; and their obvious tendency is to withdraw the attention from that unity of design, which it is the noblest employment of philosophy to illustrate, by disguising it under the semblance of an eternal and necessary order, similar to what the mathematician delights to trace among the mutual relations of quantities and figures.

These slight hints may serve as a reply in part to what Dr. Priestley has suggested with respect to the consequences likely to follow, if the spirit of Reid's philosophy should be introduced into Physics.[1] One consequence would unquestionably be, a careful separation between the principles which we learn from experience alone, and those which are fairly resolvable, by mathematical or physical reasoning, into other facts still more general, and, of course, a correction of that false logic which, while it throws an air of mystery over the plainest and most undeniable facts, levels the study of nature, in point of moral interest, with the investigations of the Geometer or of the Algebraist.

It must not, however, be supposed, that in the present state of Natural Philosophy a false logic threatens the same dangerous effects as in the Philosophy of the Mind. It may retard somewhat the progress of the student at his first outset; or it may confound, in his apprehensions, the harmony of systematical order, with the consistency and mutual dependency essential to a series of mathematical theorems; but the fundamental truths of physics are now too well established, and the checks which they furnish against sophistry are too numerous and palpable to admit the possibility of any permanent error in our deductions. In the philosophy of the mind, so difficult is the acquisition of those habits of reflection which can alone lead to a correct knowledge of the intellectual *phenomena*, that a faulty hypothesis, if skilfully fortified by the imposing, though illusory strength of arbitrary definitions and a systematical phraseology, may maintain its ground for a succession of ages.

It will not, I trust, be inferred from anything I have here

[1] *Examination of Reid's Inquiry*, p. 110.

advanced, that I mean to offer an apology for those who, either in physics or morals, would presumptuously state their own opinions with respect to the laws of nature, as a bar against future attempts to simplify and generalize them still farther. To assert that none of the mechanical explanations yet given of gravitation are satisfactory, and even to hint that ingenuity might be more profitably employed than in the search of such a theory, is something different from a gratuitous assumption of ultimate facts in physics; nor does it imply an obstinate determination to resist legitimate evidence, should some fortunate inquirer, contrary to what seems probable at present, succeed where the genius of Newton has failed. If Dr. Reid has gone farther than this in his conclusions concerning the principles which he calls *original* or *instinctive*, he has departed from that guarded language in which he commonly expresses himself; for all that it was of importance for him to conclude was, that the theories of his predecessors were, in these instances, exceptionable; and the doubts he may occasionally insinuate, concerning the success of future adventurers, so far from betraying any overweening confidence in his own understanding, are an indirect tribute to the talents of those from whose failure he draws an argument against the possibility of their undertaking.

The same eagerness to simplify and to generalize, which led Priestley to complain of the number of Reid's instinctive principles, has carried some later philosophers a step farther. According to them, the very word *instinct* is unphilosophical; and everything either in man or brute, which has been hitherto referred to this mysterious source, may be easily accounted for by experience or imitation. A few instances in which this doctrine appears to have been successfully verified, have been deemed sufficient to establish it without any limitation.

In a very original work, on which I have already hazarded some criticisms,* much ingenuity has been employed in ana-

* [*Supra*, p. 284, *seq.* The following observations on Darwin's *Zoonomia* have likewise been employed in the last volume of the *Elements*, *Works*, Vol. IV. p. 257, *seq.*]

lyzing the wonderful efforts which the human infant is enabled to make for its own preservation, the moment after its introduction to the light. Thus, it is observed, that the *fœtus*, while still in the *uterus*, learns to perform the operation of swallowing; and also learns to relieve itself, by a change of posture, from the irksomeness of continued rest: and, therefore, (if we admit these propositions,) we must conclude, that some of the actions which infants are vulgarly supposed to perform in consequence of instincts coeval with birth, are only a continuation of actions to which they were determined at an earlier period of their being. The remark is ingenious, and it may perhaps be just; but it does not prove that *instinct* is an unphilosophical term; nor does it render the operations of the infant less mysterious than they seem to be on the common supposition. How far soever the analysis, in such instances, may be carried, we must at last arrive at some *phenomenon* no less wonderful than that we mean to explain:—in other words, we must still admit as an ultimate fact, the existence of an original determination to a particular mode of action salutary or necessary to the animal; and all we have accomplished is to connect the origin of this instinct with an earlier period in the history of the human mind.

The same author has attempted to account, in a manner somewhat similar, for the different degrees in which the young of different animals are able, at the moment of birth, to exert their bodily powers. Thus, calves and chickens are able to walk almost immediately; while the human infant, even in the most favourable situations, is six or even twelve months old before he can stand alone. For this, Dr. Darwin assigns two causes:—1. That the young of some animals come into the world in a more complete state than that of others;—the colt and lamb (for example) enjoying, in this respect, a striking advantage over the puppy and the rabbit. 2. That the mode of walking of some animals coincides more perfectly than that of others with the previous motions of the *fœtus in utero*. The struggles of all animals (he observes) in the womb, must resemble their manner of swimming, as by this kind of motion they can best change

their attitude in water. But the swimming of the calf and of the chicken resembles their ordinary movements on the ground, which they have thus learned in part to execute while concealed from our observation; whereas the swimming of the human infant differing totally from his manner of walking, he has no opportunity of acquiring the last of these arts till he is exposed to our view. The theory is extremely plausible, and does honour to the author's sagacity; but it only places in a new light that provident care which Nature has taken of all her offspring in the infancy of their existence.

Another instance may contribute towards a more ample illustration of the same subject. A lamb, not many minutes after it is dropped, proceeds to search for its nourishment in that spot where alone it is to be found,—applying both its limbs and its eyes to their respective offices. The peasant observes the fact, and gives the name of *instinct*, or some corresponding term, to the unknown principle by which the animal is guided. On a more accurate examination of circumstances, the philosopher finds reason to conclude, that it is by the sense of smelling it is thus directed to its object. In proof of this, among other curious facts, the following has been quoted:—"On dissecting," says Galen, "a goat great with young, I found a brisk *embryon*, and having detached it from the *matrix*, and snatching it away before it saw its dam, I brought it into a room where there were many vessels; some filled with wine, others with oil, some with honey, others with milk, or some other liquor, and in others there were grains and fruits. We first observed the young animal get upon its feet and walk; then it shook itself, and afterwards scratched its side with one of its feet: then we saw it smelling to every one of those things that were set in the room; and when it had smelt to them all, it drank up the milk."[1] Admitting this very beautiful story to be true, (and, for my own part, I am far from being disposed to question its probability,) it only enables us to state the fact with a little more precision, in consequence of our having ascertained that it is to the sense of smelling the instinctive determination is

[1] Darwin, [*Zoonomia,*] Vol. I. pp. 195, 196.

attached. The conclusion of the peasant is not here at variance with that of the philosopher: it differs only in this, that he expresses himself in those general terms which are suited to his ignorance of the particular process by which Nature in this case accomplishes her end; and, if he did otherwise, he would be censurable for prejudging a question of which he is incompetent to form an accurate opinion.

The application of these illustrations to some of Dr. Reid's conclusions concerning the instinctive principles of the human mind, is, I flatter myself, sufficiently manifest. They relate, indeed, to a subject which differs, in various respects, from that which has fallen under his more particular consideration; but the same rules of philosophizing will be found to apply equally to both.

4. The criticisms which have been made on what Dr. Reid has written concerning the intuitive truths which he distinguishes by the title of *Principles of Common Sense*, would require a more ample discussion than I can now bestow on them;—not that the importance of these criticisms (of such of them, at least, as I have happened to meet with) demands a long or elaborate refutation; but because the subject, according to the view I wish to take of it, involves some other questions of great moment and difficulty, relative to the foundations of human knowledge. Dr. Priestley, the most formidable of Dr. Reid's antagonists, has granted as much in favour of this doctrine as it is worth while to contend for on the present occasion. "Had these writers," he observes with respect to Dr. Reid and his followers, "assumed, as the elements of their Common Sense, certain truths which are so plain that no man could doubt of them, (without entering into the ground of our assent to them,) their conduct would have been liable to very little objection. All that could have been said would have been, that, without any necessity, they had made an innovation in the received use of a term. For no person ever denied that there *are* self-evident truths, and that these must be assumed as the foundation of all our reasoning. I never met with any person who did not acknowledge this, or heard of any argu-

mentative treatise that did not go upon the supposition of it."[1] After such an acknowledgment, it is impossible to forbear asking, (with Dr. Campbell,) "What is the great point which Dr. Priestley would controvert? Is it, whether such self-evident truths shall be denominated Principles of Common Sense, or be distinguished by some other appellation?"[2]

That the doctrine in question has been, in some publications, presented in a very exceptionable form, I most readily allow; nor would I be understood to subscribe to it implicitly, even as it appears in the works of Dr. Reid. It is but an act of justice to him, however, to request, that his opinions may be judged of from his own works alone, not from those of others who may have happened to coincide with him in certain tenets, or in certain modes of expression; and that, before any ridicule be attempted on his conclusions concerning the authority of Common Sense, his antagonists would take the trouble to examine in what acceptation he has employed that phrase.

The truths which Dr. Reid seems, in most instances, disposed to refer to the judgment of this tribunal, might, in my opinion, be denominated more unexceptionably, "Fundamental Laws of Human Belief."* They have been called by a very ingenious foreigner, (M. Trembley of Geneva,) but certainly with a singular infelicity of language, *Préjugés Légitimes.* Of this kind are the following propositions:—*I am the same person to-day that I was yesterday;—The material world has an existence independent of that of percipient beings;—There are other intelligent beings in the universe beside myself;—The future course of nature will resemble the past.* Such truths no man but a philosopher ever thinks of stating to himself in words; but all our conduct and all our reasonings proceed on the supposition that they are admitted. The belief of them is essential for the preservation of our animal existence; and it is accordingly coeval with the first operations of the intellect.

One of the first writers who introduced the phrase *Common*

[1] *Examination of Dr. Reid's Inquiry*, &c., p. 119.

[2] *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, Vol. I. p. 111. See Note E.

* [*Elements*, Vol. II. Chap. i. § 2; *supra*, *Works*, Vol. III. p. 45.]

*Sense** into the technical or appropriate language of logic, was Father Buffier, in a book entitled, *Traité des Premières Vérités.* It has since been adopted by several authors of note in this country, particularly by Dr. Reid, Dr. Oswald, and Dr. Beattie; by all of whom, however, I am afraid, it must be confessed, it has been occasionally employed without a due attention to precision. The last of these writers uses it[1] to denote that power by which the mind perceives the truth of any intuitive proposition; whether it be an axiom of abstract science, or a statement of some fact resting on the immediate information of consciousness, of perception, or of memory, or one of those fundamental laws of belief which are implied in the application of our faculties to the ordinary business of life. The same extensive use of the word may, I believe, be found in the other authors just mentioned. But no authority can justify such a laxity in the employment of language in philosophical discussions; for, if mathematical axioms be (as they are manifestly and indisputably) a class of propositions essentially distinct from the other kinds of intuitive truths now described, why refer them all indiscriminately to the same principle in our constitution? If this phrase, therefore, be at all retained, precision requires that it should be employed in a more limited acceptation; and, accordingly, in the works under our consideration, it is appropriated most frequently, though by no means uniformly, to that class of Intuitive Truths which I have already called "Fundamental Laws of Belief."[2] When thus restricted, it conveys a notion, unambiguous at least, and definite; and, consequently, the question about its propriety or impropriety turns entirely on the coincidence of this definition with the meaning of the word as employed in ordinary discourse. Whatever objections, therefore, may be stated to the ex-

* [On the history of *Common Sense*, word and thing, in ancient and in modern times, see the collective edition of *Reid's Works*, excursive Note A, pp. 742-803.]

[1] *Essay on Truth*, edition second, p. 40, *et seq.*; also p. 166, *et seq.*

[2] This seems to be nearly the meaning annexed to the phrase, by the learned and acute author of *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, Vol. I. p. 109, *et seq.*

pression as now defined, will apply to it with additional force when used with the latitude which has been already censured.

I have said, that the question about the propriety of the phrase *Common Sense*, as employed by philosophers, must be decided by an appeal to general practice. For, although it be allowable and even necessary for a philosopher, to limit the acceptation of words which are employed vaguely in common discourse, it is always dangerous to give to a word a scientific meaning essentially distinct from that in which it is usually understood. It has, at least, the effect of misleading those who do not enter deeply into the subject; and of giving a paradoxical appearance to doctrines, which, if expressed in more unexceptionable terms, would be readily admitted.

It appears to me that this has actually happened in the present instance. The phrase *Common Sense*, as it is generally understood, is nearly synonymous with *Mother-wit;* denoting that degree of sagacity (depending partly on original capacity, and partly on personal experience and observation) which qualifies an individual for those simple and essential occupations which all men are called on to exercise habitually by their common nature. In this acceptation, it is opposed to those mental acquirements which are derived from a regular education and from the study of books; and refers, not to the speculative convictions of the understanding, but to that prudence and discretion which are the foundation of successful conduct. Such is the idea which Pope annexes to the word, when, speaking of *good sense*, (which means only a more than ordinary share of *common sense*,) he calls it

> ". . . . . the gift of Heaven,
> And tho' no science, fairly worth the seven."*

To speak, accordingly, of appealing from the conclusions of philosophy to common sense, had the appearance, to title-page readers, of appealing from the verdict of the learned to the voice of the multitude; or of attempting to silence free discussion, by a reference to some arbitrary and undefinable standard,

* [*Moral Essays*, Ep. iv. 43. But on the whole doctrine, see on Reid's *Works*, excursive Note A, § v. p. 756, *seq.*]

distinct from any of the intellectual powers hitherto enumerated by logicians. Whatever countenance may be supposed to have been given by some writers to such an interpretation of this doctrine, I may venture to assert, that none is afforded by the works of Dr. Reid. The standard to which he appeals is neither the creed of a particular sect, nor the inward light of enthusiastic presumption, but that constitution of human nature without which all the business of the world would immediately cease;—and the substance of his argument amounts merely to this, that those essential laws of belief, to which sceptics have objected when considered in connexion with our scientific reasonings, are implied in every step we take as active beings; and if called in question by any man in his practical concerns, would expose him universally to the charge of insanity.

In stating this important doctrine, it were perhaps to be wished, that the subject had been treated with somewhat more of analytical accuracy; and it is certainly to be regretted, that a phrase should have been employed so well calculated by its ambiguity to furnish a convenient handle to misrepresentations; but in the judgment of those who have perused Dr. Reid's writings with an intelligent and candid attention, these misrepresentations must recoil on their authors; while they who are really interested in the progress of useful science, will be disposed rather to lend their aid in supplying what is defective in his views, than to reject hastily a doctrine which aims, by the development of some logical principles, overlooked in the absurd systems which have been borrowed from the schools, to vindicate the authority of truths intimately and extensively connected with human happiness.

In the prosecution of my own speculations on the Human Mind, I shall have occasion to explain myself fully concerning this as well as various other questions connected with the foundations of philosophical Evidence. The new doctrines, and new phraseology on that subject, which have lately become fashionable among some Metaphysicians in Germany, and which, in my opinion, have contributed not a little to involve

it in additional obscurity, are a sufficient proof that this essential and fundamental article of logic is not as yet completely exhausted.

In order to bring the foregoing remarks within some compass, I have found it necessary to confine myself to such objections as strike at the root of Dr. Reid's Philosophy, without touching on any of his opinions on particular topics, however important. I have been obliged also to compress what I have stated, within narrower limits than were perhaps consistent with complete perspicuity, and to reject many illustrations which crowded upon me at almost every step of my progress.

It may not, perhaps, be superfluous to add, that supposing some of these objections to possess more force than I have ascribed to them in my reply, it will not therefore follow that little advantage is to be derived from a careful perusal of the speculations against which they are directed. Even they who dissent the most widely from Dr. Reid's conclusions, can scarcely fail to admit, that as a writer he exhibits a striking contrast to the most successful of his predecessors, in a logical precision and simplicity of language;—his statement of facts being neither vitiated by physiological hypothesis, nor obscured by scholastic mystery. Whoever has reflected on the infinite importance, in such inquiries, of a skilful use of words as the essential instrument of thought, must be aware of the influence which his works are likely to have on the future progress of science, were they to produce no other effect than a general imitation of his mode of reasoning, and of his guarded phraseology.

It is not, indeed, every reader to whom these inquiries are accessible, for habits of attention in general, and still more habits of attention to the *phenomena* of thought, require early and careful cultivation; but those who are capable of the exertion will soon recognise in Dr. Reid's statements, the faithful history of their own minds, and will find their labours amply rewarded by that satisfaction which always accompanies the discovery of useful truth. They may expect, also, to be re-

warded by some intellectual acquisitions not altogether useless in their other studies. An author well qualified to judge, from his own experience, of whatever conduces to invigorate or to embellish the understanding, has beautifully remarked, that "by turning the soul inward on itself, its forces are concentred, and are fitted for stronger and bolder flights of science; and that, in such pursuits, whether we take or whether we lose the game, the chase is certainly of service."[1] In this respect, the philosophy of the mind (abstracting entirely from that pre-eminence which belongs to it in consequence of its practical applications) may claim a distinguished rank among those preparatory disciplines which another writer of no less eminence has happily compared to "the crops which are raised, not for the sake of the harvest, but to be ploughed in as a dressing to the land."[2]

[1] Preface to Mr. Burke's *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful.*

[2] Bishop Berkeley's *Querist.* [Query 198.]

SECTION III.

CONCLUSION OF THE NARRATIVE.

THE three works to which the foregoing remarks refer, together with the *Essay on Quantity*, published in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, and a short but masterly *Analysis of Aristotle's Logic*,* which forms an Appendix to the third volume of Lord Kames's *Sketches*, comprehend the whole of Dr. Reid's publications. The interval between the dates of the first and last of these amounts to no less than forty years, although he had attained to the age of thirty-eight before he ventured to appear as an author.

With the *Essays on the Active Powers of Man* he closed his literary career, but he continued, notwithstanding, to prosecute his studies with unabated ardour and activity. The more modern improvements in chemistry attracted his particular notice, and he applied himself, with his wonted diligence and success, to the study of its new doctrines and new nomenclature. He amused himself also at times, in preparing for a Philosophical Society, of which he was a member, short Essays on particular topics, which happened to interest his curiosity, and on which he thought he might derive useful hints from friendly discussion. The most important of these were, *An Examination of Priestley's Opinions concerning Matter and Mind; Observations on the Utopia of Sir Thomas More; and Physiological Reflections on Muscular Motion.* This last Essay appears to have been written in the eighty-sixth year of his

* [This last appears in Kames's *Sketches*, published in the year 1774, and, according to *Reid himself*, it is entitled, *A Brief Account of Aristotle's Logic, with Remarks.*]

age, and was read by the author to his associates, a few months before his death. "His thoughts were led to the speculations it contains," as he himself mentions in the conclusion, "by the experience of some of the effects which old age produces on the muscular motions."—"As they were occasioned, therefore," he adds, "by the infirmities of age, they will, I hope, be heard with the greater indulgence."

Among the various occupations with which he thus enlivened his retirement, the mathematical pursuits of his earlier years held a distinguished place. He delighted to converse about them with his friends, and often exercised his skill in the investigation of particular problems. His knowledge of Ancient Geometry had not probably been, at any time, very extensive, but he had cultivated diligently those parts of mathematical science which are subservient to the study of Sir Isaac Newton's Works. He had a predilection, more particularly, for researches requiring the aid of arithmetical calculation, in the practice of which he possessed uncommon expertness and address. I think I have sometimes observed in him a slight and amiable vanity connected with this accomplishment.

The revival at this period of Dr. Reid's first scientific propensity, has often recalled to me a favourite remark of Mr. Smith's:—That of all the amusements of old age, the most grateful and soothing is a renewal of acquaintance with the favourite studies and favourite authors of our youth; a remark which, in his own case, seemed to be more particularly exemplified while he was re-perusing, with the enthusiasm of a student, the tragic poets of ancient Greece. I heard him, at least, repeat the observation more than once, while Sophocles or Euripides lay open on his table.

In the case of Dr. Reid, other motives perhaps conspired with the influence of the agreeable associations, to which Mr. Smith probably alluded. His attention was always fixed on the state of his intellectual faculties; and for counteracting the effects of time on these, mathematical studies seem to be fitted in a peculiar degree. They are fortunately, too, within the reach of many individuals, after a decay of memory dis-

qualifies them for inquiries which involve a multiplicity of details. Such detached problems, more especially as Dr. Reid commonly selected for his consideration; problems where all the *data* are brought at once under the eye, and where a connected train of thinking is not to be carried on from day to day, will be found, (as I have witnessed with pleasure in several instances), by those who are capable of such a recreation, a valuable addition to the scanty resources of a life protracted beyond the ordinary limit.

While he was thus enjoying an old age, happy in some respects beyond the usual lot of humanity, his domestic comfort suffered a deep and incurable wound by the death of Mrs. Reid. He had had the misfortune, too, of surviving, for many years, a numerous family of promising children; four of whom (two sons and two daughters) died after they attained to maturity. One daughter only was left to him when he lost his wife; and of her affectionate good offices he could not always avail himself, in consequence of the attentions which her own husband's infirmities required. Of this lady, who is still alive, (the widow of Patrick Carmichael, M.D.,[1]) I shall have occasion again to introduce the name, before I conclude this narrative.

A short extract from a letter addressed to myself by Dr. Reid, not many weeks after his wife's death, will, I am persuaded, be acceptable to many as an interesting relic of the writer.

"By the loss of my bosom-friend, with whom I lived fifty-two years, I am brought into a kind of new world, at a time of life when old habits are not easily forgot, or new ones acquired. But every world is God's world, and I am thankful for the comforts He has left me. Mrs. Carmichael has now the care of two old deaf men, and does everything in her power to please them; and both are very sensible of her goodness. I have

[1] A learned and worthy physician, who, after a long residence in Holland, where he practised medicine, retired to Glasgow. He was a younger son of Professor Gerschom Carmichael, who published, about the year 1720, an edition of Pufendorff, *De Officio Hominis et Civis*, and who is pronounced by Dr. Hutcheson, "by far the best commentator on that book."

more health than at my time of life I had any reason to expect. I walk about; entertain myself with reading what I soon forget; can converse with one person, if he articulates distinctly, and is within ten inches of my left ear; go to church, without hearing one word of what is said. You know, I never had any pretensions to vivacity, but I am still free from languor and *ennui*.

"If you are weary of this detail, impute it to the anxiety you express to know the state of my health. I wish you may have no more uneasiness at my age,—being yours most affectionately."

About four years after this event, he was prevailed on by his friend and relation, Dr. Gregory, to pass a few weeks, during the summer of 1796, at Edinburgh. He was accompanied by Mrs. Carmichael, who lived with him in Dr. Gregory's house; a situation which united, under the same roof, every advantage of medical care, of tender attachment, and of philosophical intercourse. As Dr. Gregory's professional engagements, however, necessarily interfered much with his attentions to his guest, I enjoyed more of Dr. Reid's society than might otherwise have fallen to my share. I had the pleasure, accordingly, of spending some hours with him daily, and of attending him in his walking excursions, which frequently extended to the distance of three or four miles. His faculties (excepting his memory which was considerably impaired) appeared as vigorous as ever; and, although his deafness prevented him from taking any share in general conversation, he was still able to enjoy the company of a friend. Mr. Playfair and myself were both witnesses of the acuteness which he displayed on one occasion, in detecting a mistake, by no means obvious, in a manuscript of his kinsman David Gregory, on the subject of *Prime and Ultimate Ratios*. Nor had his temper suffered from the hand of time, either in point of gentleness or of gaiety. "Instead of repining at the enjoyments of the young, he delighted in promoting them; and, after all the losses he had sustained in his own family, he continued to treat children with such condescension and benignity, that some very young ones noticed

the peculiar kindness of his eye."[1] In apparent soundness and activity of body, he resembled more a man of sixty than of eighty-seven.

He returned to Glasgow in his usual health and spirits, and continued for some weeks, to devote, as formerly, a regular portion of his time to the exercise both of body and of mind. It appears, from a letter of Dr. Cleghorn's to Dr. Gregory, that he was still able to work with his own hands in his garden; and he was found by Dr. Brown occupied in the solution of an algebraical problem of considerable difficulty, in which, after the labour of a day or two, he at last succeeded. It was in the course of the same short interval, that he committed to writing those particulars concerning his ancestors which I have already mentioned.

This active and useful life was now, however, drawing to a conclusion. A violent disorder attacked him about the end of September, but does not seem to have occasioned much alarm to those about him, till he was visited by Dr. Cleghorn, who soon after communicated his apprehensions in a letter to Dr. Gregory. Among other symptoms, he mentioned particularly "that alteration of voice and features, which, though not easily described, is so well known to all who have opportunities of seeing life close." Dr. Reid's own opinion of his case was probably the same with that of his physician, as he expressed to him on his first visit, his hope that he was "soon to get his dismission." After a severe struggle, attended with repeated strokes of palsy, he died on the 7th of October following. Dr. Gregory had the melancholy satisfaction of visiting his venerable friend on his death-bed, and of paying him this unavailing mark of attachment, before his powers of recollection were entirely gone.

The only surviving descendant of Dr. Reid is Mrs. Carmichael, a daughter worthy in every respect of such a father,—

[1] I have borrowed this sentence from a just and elegant character of Dr. Reid, which appeared a few days after his death, in one of the Glasgow Journals. I had occasion frequently to verify the truth of the observation during his last visit to Edinburgh.

long the chief comfort and support of his old age, and his anxious nurse in his last moments.[1]

In point of bodily constitution, few men have been more indebted to nature than Dr. Reid. His form was vigorous and athletic, and his muscular force (though he was somewhat under the middle size) uncommonly great;—advantages to which his habits of temperance and exercise, and the unclouded serenity of his temper, did ample justice. His countenance was strongly expressive of deep and collected thought; but when brightened up by the face of a friend, what chiefly caught the attention was, a look of good will and of kindness. A picture of him, for which he consented, at the particular request of Dr. Gregory, to sit to Mr. Raeburn during his last visit to Edinburgh, is generally and justly ranked among the happiest performances of that excellent artist. The medallion of Tassie, also, for which he sat in the eighty-first year of his age, presents a very perfect resemblance.

I have little to add to what the foregoing pages contain with respect to his character. Its most prominent features were,—intrepid and inflexible rectitude;—a pure and devoted attachment to truth;—and an entire command (acquired by the unwearied exertions of a long life) over all his passions. Hence, in those parts of his writings where his subject forces him to dispute the conclusions of others, a scrupulous rejection of every expression calculated to irritate those whom he was anxious to convince, and a spirit of liberality and good-humour towards his opponents, from which no asperity on their part could provoke him, for a moment, to deviate. The progress of useful knowledge, more especially in what relates to human nature and to human life, he believed to be retarded rather than advanced by the intemperance of controversy, and to be secured most effectually when intrusted to the slow but irresistible influence of sober reasoning. That the argumentative talents of the disputants might be improved by such altercations, he was willing to allow; but, considered in their connexion with the great objects which all classes of writers

[1] See Note F.

profess equally to have in view, he was convinced "that they have done more harm to the practice, than they have done service to the theory of morality."[1]

In private life no man ever maintained, more eminently or more uniformly, the dignity of philosophy, combining with the most amiable modesty and gentleness, the noblest spirit of independence. The only preferments which he ever enjoyed, he owed to the unsolicited favour of the two learned bodies who successively adopted him into their number; and the respectable rank which he supported in society, was the well-earned reward of his own academical labours. The studies in which he delighted were little calculated to draw on him the patronage of the great, and he was unskilled in the art of courting advancement, by "fashioning his doctrines to the varying hour."

As a philosopher, his genius was more peculiarly characterized by a sound, cautious, distinguishing judgment,—by a singular patience and perseverance of thought,—and by habits of the most fixed and concentrated attention to his own mental operations; endowments which, although not the most splendid in the estimation of the multitude, would seem entitled, from the history of science, to rank among the rarest gifts of the mind.

With these habits and powers, he united (what does not always accompany them) the curiosity of a naturalist, and the eye of an observer; and, accordingly, his information about everything relating to physical science, and to the useful arts, was extensive and accurate. His memory for historical details was not so remarkable; and he used sometimes to regret the imperfect degree in which he possessed this faculty. I am inclined, however, to think, that in doing so he underrated his natural advantages; estimating the strength of memory, as men commonly do, rather by the recollection of particular facts, than by the possession of those general conclusions, from a subserviency to which, such facts derive their principal value.

[1] Preface to Pope's *Essay on Man*.

Towards the close of life, indeed, his memory was much less vigorous than the other powers of his intellect, in none of which could I ever perceive any symptom of decline. His ardour for knowledge, too, remained unextinguished to the last; and, when cherished by the society of the young and inquisitive, seemed even to increase with his years. What is still more remarkable, he retained in extreme old age all the sympathetic tenderness, and all the moral sensibility of youth; the liveliness of his emotions, wherever the happiness of others was concerned, forming an affecting contrast to his own unconquerable firmness under the severest trials.

Nor was the sensibility which he retained, the selfish and sterile offspring of taste and indolence. It was alive and active, wherever he could command the means of relieving the distresses, or of adding to the comforts of others, and was often felt in its effects where he was unseen and unknown. Among the various proofs of this, which have happened to fall under my own knowledge, I cannot help mentioning particularly (upon the most unquestionable authority) the secrecy with which he conveyed his occasional benefactions to his former parishioners at New Machar, long after his establishment at Glasgow. One donation, in particular, during the scarcity of 1782,—a donation which, notwithstanding all his precautions, was distinctly traced to his beneficence,—might perhaps have been thought disproportionate to his limited income, had not his own simple and moderate habits multiplied the resources of his humanity.

His opinions on the most important subjects are to be found in his works; and that spirit of piety which animated every part of his conduct, forms the best comment on their practical tendency. In the state in which he found the philosophical world, he believed that his talents could not be so usefully employed as in combating the schemes of those who aimed at the complete subversion of religion, both natural and revealed;—convinced with Dr. Clarke, that "as Christianity presupposes the truth of Natural Religion, whatever tends to discredit the latter, must have a proportionally greater effect in weakening

the authority of the former."[1] In his views of both he seems to have coincided nearly with Bishop Butler,—an author whom he held in the highest estimation. A very careful abstract of the treatise entitled *Analogy*, drawn up by Dr. Reid, many years ago, for his own use, still exists among his manuscripts; and the short *Dissertation on Virtue* which Butler has annexed to that work, together with the *Discourses on Human Nature* published in his volume of *Sermons*, he used always to recommend as the most satisfactory account that has yet appeared of the fundamental principles of Morals; nor could he conceal his regret, that the profound philosophy which these Discourses contain, should of late have been so generally supplanted in England by the speculations of some other moralists, who, while they profess to idolize the memory of Locke, "approve little or nothing in his writings but his errors."[2]

Deeply impressed, however, as he was with his own principles, he possessed the most perfect liberality towards all whom he believed to be honestly and conscientiously devoted to the search of truth. With one very distinguished character, the late Lord Kames, he lived in the most cordial and affectionate friendship, notwithstanding the avowed opposition of their sentiments on some moral questions, to which he attached the greatest importance. Both of them, however, were the friends of virtue and of mankind; and both were able to temper the warmth of free discussion with the forbearance and good humour founded on reciprocal esteem. No two men, certainly, ever exhibited a more striking contrast in their conversation, or in their constitutional tempers;—the one, slow and cautious in his decisions, even on those topics which he had most diligently studied; reserved and silent in promiscuous society; and retaining, after all his literary eminence, the same simple and unassuming manners which he brought from his country

[1] *Collection of Papers which passed between Leibnitz and Clarke.* See Dr. Clarke's Dedication.

[2] I have adopted here the words which Dr. Clarke applied to some of Mr. Locke's earlier followers. They are still more applicable to many writers of the present times. See Clarke's *First Reply to Leibnitz.*

residence;—the other, lively, rapid, and communicative; accustomed, by his professional pursuits, to wield with address the weapons of controversy, and not averse to a trial of his powers on questions the most foreign to his ordinary habits of inquiry. But these characteristical differences, while to their common friends they lent an additional charm to the distinguishing merits of each, served only to enliven their own social intercourse, and to cement their mutual attachment.

I recollect few, if any anecdotes, of Dr. Reid, which appear to me calculated to throw additional light on his character; and I suspect strongly, that many of those which are to be met with in biographical publications, are more likely to mislead than to inform. A trifling incident, it is true, may sometimes paint a peculiar feature better than the most elaborate description; but a selection of incidents really characteristical, presupposes, in the observer, a rare capacity to discriminate and to generalize; and where this capacity is wanting, a biographer, with the most scrupulous attention to the veracity of his details, may yet convey a very false conception of the individual he would describe. As, in the present instance, my subject afforded no materials for such a choice, I have attempted, to the best of my abilities, (instead of retailing detached fragments of conversations, or recording insulated and unmeaning occurrences,) to communicate to others the general impressions which Dr. Reid's character has left on my own mind. In this attempt, I am far from being confident that I have succeeded; but, how barren soever I may have thus rendered my pages in the estimation of those who consider biography merely in the light of an amusing tale, I have, at least, the satisfaction to think, that my picture, though faint in the colouring, does not present a distorted resemblance of the original.

The confidential correspondence of an individual with his friends, affords to the student of human nature materials of far greater authenticity and importance;—more particularly, the correspondence of a man like Dr. Reid, who will not be suspected by those who knew him, of accommodating his letters (as has been alleged of Cicero) to the humours and principles

of those whom he addressed. I am far, at the same time, from thinking, that the correspondence of Dr. Reid would be generally interesting, or even that he excelled in this species of writing; but few men, I sincerely believe, who have written so much, have left behind them such unblemished memorials of their virtue.

At present, I shall only transcribe two letters, which I select from a considerable number now lying before me, as they seem to accord, more than the others, with the general design of this Memoir. The first (which is dated January 13, 1779) is addressed to the Reverend William Gregory, (late Rector of St. Andrew's, Canterbury,) then an Undergraduate in Balliol College, Oxford. It relates to a remarkable peculiarity in Dr. Reid's physical temperament, connected with the subject of dreaming; and is farther interesting as a genuine record of some particulars in his early habits, in which it is easy to perceive the openings of a superior mind.

"The fact which your brother the Doctor desires to be informed of, was as you mention it. As far as I remember the circumstances, they were as follow:—

"About the age of fourteen, I was, almost every night, unhappy in my sleep from frightful dreams. Sometimes hanging over a dreadful precipice, and just ready to drop down; sometimes pursued for my life, and stopped by a wall, or by a sudden loss of all strength; sometimes ready to be devoured by a wild beast. How long I was plagued with such dreams I do not now recollect. I believe it was for a year or two at least; and I think they had quite left me before I was sixteen. In those days, I was much given to what Mr. Addison in one of his *Spectators* calls *Castle-building;* and in my evening solitary walk, which was generally all the exercise I took, my thoughts would hurry me into some active scene, where I generally acquitted myself much to my own satisfaction; and in these scenes of imagination, I performed many a gallant exploit. At the same time, in my dreams I found myself the most arrant coward that ever was. Not only my courage, but my strength, failed me in every danger; and I often rose from my bed in the

morning in such a panic, that it took some time to get the better of it. I wished very much to get free of these uneasy dreams, which not only made me unhappy in sleep, but often left a disagreeable impression in my mind for some part of the following day. I thought it was worth trying, whether it was possible to recollect that it was all a dream, and that I was in no real danger. I often went to sleep with my mind as strongly impressed as I could with this thought, that I never in my life-time was in any real danger, and that every fright I had was a dream. After many fruitless endeavours to recollect this when the danger appeared, I effected it at last, and have often, when I was sliding over a precipice into the abyss, recollected that it was all a dream, and boldly jumped down. The effect of this commonly was, that I immediately awoke. But I awoke calm and intrepid, which I thought a great acquisition. After this, my dreams were never very uneasy; and, in a short time, I dreamed not at all.

"During all this time I was in perfect health; but whether my ceasing to dream was the effect of the recollection above mentioned, or of any change in the habit of my body, which is usual about that period of life, I cannot tell. I think it may more probably be imputed to the last. However, the fact was, that, for at least forty years after, I dreamed none, to the best of my remembrance: and finding, from the testimony of others, that this is somewhat uncommon, I have often, as soon as I awoke, endeavoured to recollect, without being able to recollect, anything that passed in my sleep. For some years past, I can sometimes recollect some kind of dreaming thoughts, but so incoherent that I can make nothing of them.

"The only distinct dream I ever had since I was about sixteen, as far as I remember, was about two years ago. I had got my head blistered for a fall. A plaster which was put upon it after the blister, pained me excessively for a whole night. In the morning I slept a little, and dreamed very distinctly, that I had fallen into the hands of a party of Indians, and was scalped.

"I am apt to think, that as there is a state of sleep, and a state wherein we are awake, so there is an intermediate state,

which partakes of the other two. If a man peremptorily resolves to rise at an early hour for some interesting purpose, he will of himself awake at that hour. A sick-nurse gets the habit of sleeping in such a manner, that she hears the least whisper of the sick person, and yet is refreshed by this kind of half sleep. The same is the case of a nurse who sleeps with a child in her arms. I have slept on horseback, but so as to preserve my balance; and if the horse stumbled, I could make the exertion necessary for saving me from a fall, as if I was awake.

"I hope the sciences at your good University are not in this state. Yet, from so many learned men, so much at their ease, one would expect something more than we hear of."

For the other letter, I am indebted to one of Dr. Reid's most intimate friends, [Dr. James Gregory,] to whom it was addressed, in the year 1784, on occasion of the melancholy event to which it alludes.

"I sympathize with you very sincerely in the loss of a most amiable wife. I judge of your feelings by the impression she made upon my own heart, on a very short acquaintance. But all the blessings of this world are transient and uncertain; and it would be but a melancholy scene, if there were no prospect of another.

"I have often had occasion to admire the resignation and fortitude of young persons, even of the weaker sex, in the views of death, when their imagination is filled with all the gay prospects which the world presents at that period. I have been witness to instances of this kind, which I thought truly heroic, and I hear Mrs. G—— gave a remarkable one.

"To see the soul increase in vigour and wisdom, and in every amiable quality, when health and strength and animal spirits decay; when it is to be torn by violence from all that filled the imagination, and flattered hope, is a spectacle truly grand, and instructive to the surviving. To think, that the soul perishes in that fatal moment, when it is purified by this fiery trial, and fitted for the noblest exertions in another state, is an opinion

which I cannot help looking down upon with contempt and disdain.

"In old people, there is no more merit in leaving this world with perfect acquiescence, than in rising from a feast after one is full. When I have before me the prospect of the infirmities, the distresses and the peevishness of old age, and when I have already received more than my share of the good things of this life, it would be ridiculous indeed to be anxious about prolonging it; but when I was four-and-twenty, to have had no anxiety for its continuance, would, I think, have required a noble effort. Such efforts in those that are called to make them, surely shall not lose their reward."

I have now finished all that the limits of my plan permit me to offer here, as a tribute to the memory of this excellent person. In the details which I have stated, both with respect to his private life and his scientific pursuits, I have dwelt chiefly on such circumstances as appeared to me most likely to interest the readers of his works, by illustrating his character as a man, and his views as an author. Of his merits as an instructor of youth, I have said but little; partly from a wish to avoid unnecessary diffuseness, but chiefly from my anxiety to enlarge on those still more important labours, of which he has bequeathed the fruits to future ages. And yet, had he left no such monument to perpetuate his name, the fidelity and zeal with which he discharged, during so long a period, the obscure but momentous duties of his official station, would, in the judgment of the wise and good, have ranked him in the first order of useful citizens. "Nec enim is solus reipublicæ prodest, qui candidatos extrahit, et tuetur reos, et de pace belloque censet; sed qui juventutem exhortatur; qui, in tantâ bonorum præceptorum inopiâ, virtute instruit animos; qui, ad pecuniam luxuriamque cursu ruentes prensat ac retrahit, et, si nihil aliud, certe moratur: in privato, publicum negotium agit."[1]

In concluding this Memoir, I trust I shall be pardoned, if, for once, I give way to a personal feeling, while I express the

[1] Seneca, *De Tranquillitate*, Cap. iii.

satisfaction with which I now close finally my attempts as a Biographer. Those which I have already made were imposed on me by the irresistible calls of duty and attachment; and, feeble as they are, when compared with the magnitude of subjects so splendid and so various, they have encroached deeply on that small portion of literary leisure which indispensable engagements allow me to command. I cannot, at the same time, be insensible to the gratification of having endeavoured to associate, in some degree, my name with three of the greatest which have adorned this age;—happy, if without deviating intentionally from truth I may have succeeded, however imperfectly, in my wish, to gratify, at once, the curiosity of the public, and to soothe the recollections of surviving friends. But I, too, have designs and enterprises of my own; and the execution of these (which, alas! swell in magnitude as the time for their accomplishment hastens to a period) claims at length an undivided attention. Yet I should not look back on the past with regret, if I could indulge the hope, that the facts which it has been my province to record,—by displaying those fair rewards of extensive usefulness, and of permanent fame, which talents and industry, when worthily directed, cannot fail to secure,—may contribute, in one single instance, to foster the proud and virtuous independence of genius; or, amidst the gloom of poverty and solitude, to gild the distant prospect of the unfriended scholar, whose laurels are now slowly ripening in the unnoticed privacy of humble life.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

NOTE A, p. 247.

IN the account given in the text of Dr. Reid's ancestors, I have followed scrupulously the information contained in his own memorandums. I have some suspicion, however, that he has committed a mistake with respect to the name of the translator of Buchanan's *History*, which would appear, from the MS. in Glasgow College, to have been—not Adam, but John. At the same time, as this last statement rests on an authority altogether unknown, (being written in a hand different from the rest of the MS.,) there is a possibility that Dr. Reid's account may be correct; and, therefore, I have thought it advisable, in a matter of so very trifling consequence, to adhere to it in preference to the other.

The following particulars with respect to Thomas Reid are copied from Dempster, a contemporary writer, whose details concerning his countrymen, it must, however, be confessed, are not always to be implicitly relied on.

"Thomas Reidus Aberdonensis, pueritiæ meæ et infantilis otii sub Thoma Cargillo collega, Lovanii literas in schola Lipsii seriò didicit, quas magno nomine in Germania docuit, carus Principibus. Londini diu in comitatu humanissimi ac clarissimi viri, Fulconis Grevilli, Regii Consiliarii Interioris et Angliæ Proquæstoris, egit: tum ad amicitiam Regis, eodem Fulcone deducente, evectus, inter Palatinos admissus, à Literis Latinis Regi fuit. Scripsit multa, ut est magnâ indole et variâ eruditione," &c.—"Ex aula se, nemine conscio, nuper proripuit, dum illi omnia festinati honoris augmenta singuli ominarentur, nec quid deinde egerit aut quò locorum se contulerit quisquam indicare potuit. Multi suspicabantur, tædio aulæ affectum, monasticæ quieti seipsum tradidisse, sub annum 1618. Rumor postea fuit in aulam rediisse, et meritissimis honoribus redditum, sed nunquam id consequetur quod virtus promeretur."[1]

What was the judgment of Thomas Reid's own times with respect to his genius, and what their hopes of his posthumous fame, may be collected from an Elegy on his death by his learned countryman [Sir] Robert Aytoun. Already, before the lapse of two hundred years, some apology, alas! may be thought necessary for an attempt to rescue his name from total oblivion.

Aytoun's *Elegy* on Reid is referred to in terms very flattering both to its author and to its subject, by the editor of the Collection entitled *Poëtarum Scotorum*

[1] *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Scotorum*, Lib. xvi. p. 576.

Musæ Sacræ:—"*In obitum Thomæ Rheidi* [*Rhædi*] *epicedium* extat elegantissimum Roberti Aytoni, viri literis ac dignitate clarissimi, in *Delitiis Poëtarum Scotorum*, ubi et ipsius quoque poëmata, paucula quidem illa, sed venusta, sed elegantia, comparent."

The only works of Alexander Reid of which I have heard, are *Chirurgical Lectures on Tumors and Ulcers*, London, 1635; and a *Treatise of the First Part of Chirurgerie*, London, 1638. He appears to have been the physician and friend of the celebrated mathematician Thomas Harriot, of whose interesting history so little was known, till the recent discovery of his manuscripts by Mr. Zach of Saxe-Gotha.

A remarkable instance of the careless or capricious orthography formerly so common in writing proper names, occurs in the different individuals to whom this note refers. Sometimes the family name is written—*Reid;* on other occasions, *Riede, Read, Rhead,* or *Rhaid;* [In Latin, *Rhædus, Rheidus, Reidus,* &c.*]

Note B, p. 248.

Dr. Turnbull's work on Moral Philosophy was published at London in 1740. As I have only turned over a few pages, I cannot say anything with respect to its merits. The mottos on the title-page are curious, when considered in connexion with those inquiries which his pupil afterwards prosecuted with so much success; and may, perhaps without his perceiving it, have had some effect in suggesting to him that plan of philosophizing which he so systematically and so happily pursued.

"If Natural Philosophy, in all its parts, by pursuing this method, shall at length be perfected, the bounds of Moral Philosophy will also be enlarged."—Newton's *Optics*.

"Account for Moral, as for Natural things."—*Pope*.

For the opinion of a very competent judge with respect to the merits of the *Treatise on Ancient Painting, vide* Hogarth's Print, entitled, *Beer-Lane*.

Note C, p. 262.

James Moor, LL.D., Author of a very ingenious *Fragment on Greek Grammar*, and of other philological Essays. He was also distinguished by a profound acquaintance with ancient Geometry. Dr. Simson, an excellent judge of his merits both in literature and science, has somewhere honoured him with the following encomium:—"Tum in Mathesi, tum in Græcis Literis multum et feliciter versatus."

Alexander Wilson, M.D., and Patrick Wilson, Esq., well known over Europe by their *Observations on the Solar Spots*, and many other valuable memoirs.

Note D, p. 287.

A writer of great talents, (after having reproached Dr. Reid with "a gross ignorance, disgraceful to the University of which he was a member,") boasts of the

* [See also Reid's *Collected Works*, pp. 35, 36, 38.]

trifling expense of time and thought which it had cost himself to overturn his Philosophy. "Dr. Oswald is pleased to pay me a compliment in saying, that 'I might employ myself to more advantage to the public, by pursuing other branches of science, than by deciding rashly on a subject which he sees I have not studied.' In return to this compliment, I shall not affront him by telling him how very little of my time this business has hitherto taken up. If he alludes to my *experiments*, I can assure him that I have lost no time at all; for having been intent upon such as require the use of a burning lens, I believe I have not lost one hour of sunshine on this account. And the public may perhaps be informed, some time or other, of what I have been doing in the *sun*, as well as in the *shade*."[1]

Note E, p. 304.

The following strictures on Dr. Priestley's *Examination*, &c., are copied from a very judicious note in Dr. Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, Vol. I. p. 111, [Book I. chap. v.]

. . . "I shall only subjoin two remarks on this book. The *first* is,—That the author, through the whole, confounds two things totally distinct,—certain associations of ideas, and certain judgments implying belief, which, though in *some*, are not in *all* cases, and therefore not *necessarily* connected with association. And if so, merely to account for the association, is in no case to account for the belief with which it is attended. Nay, admitting his plea, (p. 86,) that by the principle of association, not only the ideas, but the concomitant belief may be accounted for, even this does not invalidate the doctrine he impugns. For, let it be observed, that it is one thing to assign a cause, which, from the mechanism of our nature, has given rise to a particular tenet of belief, and another thing to produce a reason by which the understanding has been convinced. Now, unless this be done as to the principles in question, they must be considered as primary truths in respect of the understanding, which never deduced them from other truths, and which is under a necessity, in all her moral reasonings, of founding upon them. In fact, to give any other account of our conviction of them, is to confirm, instead of confuting the doctrine, that in all argumentation they must be regarded as primary truths, or truths which reason never inferred through any medium, from other truths previously perceived.—My *second* remark is,—That though this examiner has, from Dr. Reid, given us a catalogue of first principles, which he deems unworthy of the honourable place assigned them, he has nowhere thought proper to give us a list of those self-evident truths, which, by his own account, and in his own express words, 'must be assumed as the foundation of all our reasoning.' How much light might have been thrown upon the subject by the contrast! Perhaps we should have been enabled, on the comparison, to discover some distinctive characters in his genuine axioms, which would have preserved us from the danger of confounding them with their spurious ones. Nothing is more evident than that, in whatever regards matter of fact, the mathematical axioms will not answer. These are purely fitted for evolving the abstract relations of quantity. This he in effect owns himself, (p. 39.) It would have been obliging, then, and would have greatly contributed to shorten the controversy, if he had given us, at

[1] Priestley's *Examination of Reid's Inquiry*, &c. p. 357. See also pp. 101, 102, of the same work.

least, a specimen of those self-evident principles, which, in his estimation, are the *non plus ultra* of moral reasoning."

NOTE F, p. 315.

Dr. Reid's father, the Rev. Lewis Reid, married, for his second wife, Janet, daughter of Mr. Fraser of Phopachy, in the county of Inverness. A daughter of this marriage is still alive,—the wife of the Rev. Alexander Leslie, and the mother of the Rev. James Leslie, ministers of Fordoun. To the latter of these gentlemen I am indebted for the greater part of the information I have been able to collect with respect to Dr. Reid, previous to his removal to Glasgow;—Mr. Leslie's regard for the memory of his uncle having prompted him, not only to transmit to me such particulars as had fallen under his own knowledge, but some valuable letters on the same subject, which he procured from his relations and friends in the north.

For all the members of this most respectable family, Dr. Reid entertained the strongest sentiments of affection and regard. During several years before his death, a daughter of Mrs. Leslie's was a constant inmate of his house, and added much to the happiness of his small domestic circle.

Another daughter of Mr. Lewis Reid was married to the Rev. John Rose, minister of Udny. She died in 1793. In this connexion, Dr. Reid was no less fortunate than in the former; and to Mr. Rose I am indebted for favours of the same kind with those which I have already acknowledged from Mr. Leslie.

The widow of Mr. Lewis Reid died in 1798, in the eighty-seventh year of her age, having survived her step-son, Dr. Reid, more than a year.

The limits within which I was obliged to confine my biographical details, prevented me from availing myself of many interesting circumstances which were communicated to me through the authentic channels which I have now mentioned. But I cannot omit this opportunity of returning to my different correspondents, my warmest acknowledgments for the pleasure and instruction which I received from their letters.

Mr. Jardine, also, the learned Professor of Logic in the University of Glasgow, a gentleman who, for many years, lived in habits of the most confidential intimacy with Dr. Reid and his family, is entitled to my best thanks for his obliging attention to various queries, which I took the liberty to propose to him, concerning the history of our common friend.

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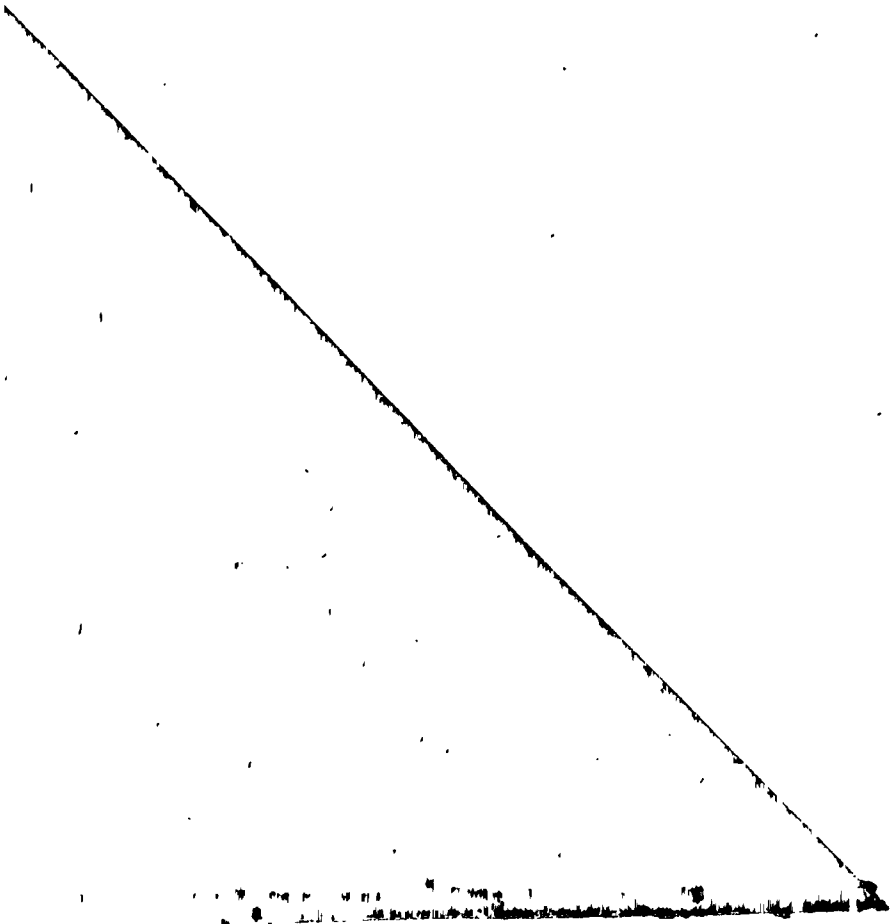

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